

This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

46.

1000.





46.

1000.





GREAT TOM OF OXFORD.

VOL. I.



Frederick Shoberl, Jun'or, Printer to His Royal Highness Prince Albert,
51, Rupert Street, Haymarket, London.

GREAT TOM OF OXFORD.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

Voce summâ resonans.

HORACE.

It was on a cold winter's night, about the middle of January, in the year 18—, that I, Mr. Suum Cuique, found myself and my luggage (one portmanteau and a box of books) lifted off the roof of the Oxford fly-coach, and deposited at Tom gateway. I was about to enter the University, Christchurch College, and my rooms at one and the same time. I had already been matriculated, and paid my fees and my respects to the Vice-chancellor. I found the latter proceeding, I must confess, much easier and far less expensive than the

former; though I had not so heavy a sum to pay as many who were matriculated with me, because I was about to enter on my college career as a servitor—they call them sizars at Cambridge — whereas those around me were some noblemen, some gentlemen commoners, and others commoners. I did not, of course, then know the exact distinction between these ranks; but, having been educated at a country grammar-school, and consequently imbued with some learning, I gathered enough from the various phases of the Vice-chancellor's face, and from the varied amount of fees paid at the table of the Apodyterium, to convince me that there *was* a distinction, and that the study of the *red*-book had interfered with, if not superseded, that of the black-letter volumes in the University.

I remember well that both the coachman and the guard, when they had deposited me and my luggage, and kicked at the gate to let the porter know some one craved admittance, made me a sort of demi-bow, and touched the brim of their hats. I returned the salute as gracefully as I could, and turned into college

through the small portal in the huge gates, which the college Cerberus had opened for my admission.

I was gazing, by the solemn light of a January moon, on the solemn scene before me, and wondering why a leaden statue of Mercury in the middle of the Quadrangle should be throwing cold water on the air on such a cold night, when I heard my driver say to the porter,

"That ere's a downright shabby."

"Not so much of a screw as a dead nail," added the guard, as he dropped the deal box containing my classics, with an evident intention of smashing its uncorded sides.

"What! ain't he stood handsome?" inquired the porter, in tones betokening the height of amazement.

"Handsome?" cried both coachman and guard; "vy, he ain't stood nuffin at all!"

"Not tipped?" shouted Cerberus in still more energetic tones.

"No; not even a tanner, though we tipped him the usual signs," said the guard.

"And I've had the care of his precious carcase for up'ards of fifty mile," said the coachman.

"And I of his luggidge over the worst ground in the kingdom," added the guard.

"Let's see who he is," cried the porter, as he rushed into his lodge, and brought out a candle and lantern. He turned the box up so as to get a glimpse of the name upon it; and, in a tone which vacillated between contempt and pity, said, "He's only a servitor, poor devil!"

"What, a sort of charity-boy, like, eh?" said the driver.

"Exactly," said the porter; "carries in the first dish, and eats what's left of the last; but I'll make him tip for the honour of our house."

So saying, he advanced towards me; and, in a more respectful manner than I could reckon upon, he suggested to me—"the servitor, poor devil"—that it was customary to present to the driver and guard of a coach a gratuity in addition to the amount of the fare.

I returned to the gates, and by the light of his lantern contrived, though my hands were benumbed by the cold, to extract from my pockets all the silver I had, which consisted of three bright shillings new from the Mint of King George the Third. I was about to bestow one of them on each of the applicants, when, to my great surprise, the driver said,

"No, thank ye, sir; the vill's as good as the deed. Come along, Villiam, ve isn't so bad off in the world as to deprive a poor young chap of a few 'ogs as was evidently given to 'im by 'is poor mother at partin'."

"Not upon no consideration whatsomdever, Tom," replied the guard. "I'd be pison'd fust."

So, with a respectful good night, and wishing me good luck, they returned to their coach, leaving me not a little surprised at their unexpected considerateness, and humbled at the thought that my poverty should thus be made known on the first day of my appearance in college. The porter, too, held his lantern to my face, and I felt he was examining my looks. He doubtless saw the blush

of shame that mantled over my cheeks, and it seemed to have a due effect upon him; for, as he turned the key in the lock, he said, in kindly tones that went to my heart,

"You would be glad to go to bed, sir? The servants are all gone out of college, but I will light you to your rooms, and bring your luggage up for you."

I thanked him; for though I was hungry I was cold and sleepy, and wanted warmth and repose more than I did a supper, for which I was afraid to ask.

He took up my portmanteau, and, turning to the left, preceded me up the first staircase, observing, as he mounted the stairs, "The rooms are comfortable enough, sir, but rather noisy until you get used to them."

Of course I could not tell what he meant, as everything was as still as death *then;* and when I had entered my rooms, which were close to the tower over the gateway, I found them snugly furnished, and a fire burning in the grate, which, under the skilful pokering of my guide, quickly sent forth a cheerful blaze. Candles were speedily lighted; and,

to my great joy, I found some cold meat and bread put out for me; a kettle placed on the hob; and a bottle of something which my guide told me was gin, which my provident scout had procured upon the chance of my being in want of something cheering after my cheerless journey.

When he had shown me my bedroom—which was a mere closet under the tower—the porter left me to myself. I felt as if I was alone in the world; and when I gazed round me and missed the faces of my mother and sisters, my father and brothers, from whom I had never before been separated for any length of time, I burst out into tears which I could not control, and wished that I had not been so successful a scholar as to draw upon me the attention of the gentleman who had solicited and procured for me the small pittance which was to enable me to receive a university education. I was *very* wretched; but the brightness of the fire, the tempting appearance of the little supper, and the singing of the kettle on the hob, reminded me that I was master of everything around me,

and hungry withal. I fell-to with an appetite that an alderman would envy; and, after clearing the decks of all the solids, proceeded to do—what I had never done before—make myself a glass of grog. Whether I was or was not a judge of the proportions used in compounding gin-toddy, I cannot say, but I certainly succeeded in manufacturing a goblet of half spirit and half water, with a considerable quantity of sugar in it, which seemed to send the blood thrilling to the extremities of my body, and drove out all thoughts of a gloomy nature as to my future career.

After gazing at the fire for some ten minutes, and seeing in the bright coals bright forms of faces at home, and bright prospects of academic honours, I felt a degree of somnolency come over me which I had never experienced before. I managed to undress myself and creep into bed somehow or another, but how I cannot even now say. The effect of my long journey, through the cold open air, upon the top of a heavy-jolting vehicle, and the unwonted stimulus of a strong tumbler of spirits and water, combined to send me off

instantaneously into a deep and half-apoplectic sleep. I am not at all aware how long I had slept before I was awakened by a noise like the grating movement of some large ill-oiled machinery, and the sound of something that seemed like a giant hammer falling on the ceiling of my room, which appeared to be formed of some deeply-sonorous, metallic substance. "Bom, bom, bom!" — the very air seemed to vibrate with the sound; my bed shook under me; and the very walls, and the chairs and tables, seemed to be suffering from an incipient earthquake!

I sprang out of bed, and rushed into my sitting-room. After tumbling over the chairs, and running against the table and sofa, I contrived to find my way to the outer door. I opened it with some little difficulty, for I was unacquainted with the management of an oak-door lock, and listened at the top of my staircase: all was still as death; and, as the passage lamp was out, and I was not certain of the geography of the place, and, moreover, in my night-dress only, I thought it more prudent to return to my bed, and risk another

attack of earthquake than a certain cold and a probable tumble down the steep staircase.

I managed to find my way into my bed again, and into another deep slumber, from which I was roused by the same awful sounds as before, attended with the same results—a spring out of bed and into my sitting-room. It was then, however, beginning to get light; so, as soon as the "Bom, bom, bomming" had ceased, and the furniture and walls no longer shook and shivered, I dressed myself as quickly as I could, and rushed down to the porter's lodge to seek an explanation of the causes which had alarmed me so much.

"Lord love ye!" said Cerberus, with a look made up with pity for my ignorance and sorrow for my fright; "it was only Great Tom."

"Great Tom!" said I. "Is he mad and confined up above?" for I had suddenly conceived a notion that the clanking of machinery which I heard was the clanking of the chains and fetters of one "Poor Tom of Bedlam," of whom I had read in my youth, and that the "Bom, bom, bom," which had so alarmed

me, was the result of a violent attempt to escape by bursting open his door with a sledge-hammer.

"Mad? Confined? What *do* you mean? Why, Great Tom's a *bell*, and one of my principal perkisites. He's just over your head, and holds communication with the great clock, and *hits* every hour. You'll soon get used to him, though he is a little noisy at first. I never knowed a gentleman as had your rooms, as didn't say he missed him uncommon when he changed for another set."

With this explanation, my alarm at earthquakes and madmen ceased; and I doubted not that I should soon get used to the inconvenience, although it was not a slight one, as I was not given to nervous head-aches, and had a decided tendency to sleeping soundly.

I confined myself to my rooms during the next day, arranging my books and papers; and, after the clock had struck some half dozen hours, contrived to bear the noise without leaping out of my chair. In the evening I had got used to it, and sat down to my supper after it had *hit* nine, as the porter

phrased it, with a full determination to trouble myself no further about a mere clock and a great bell. I cut a slice of the grilled chicken before me, and was preparing to insert the first mouthful, when such a din arose as I had never heard before. "Bom, bom, bom!" forty times as loud as the clock-striking, was struck up and continued until my glasses, plates, dishes, knives and forks, fairly danced upon, and some of them off, the table. The books fell from my shelves, the poker, tongs, and shovel joined in the uproar; and the tables, chairs, and looking-glasses played their parts in a horrible accompaniment obligato. I stood, like a suddenly-aroused sleeper, amidst the ruins of Lisbon, wondering at the destruction around me, and expecting to be immolated every moment with the falling substances.

What could it mean? "Bom, bom, bom!" Was the clock gone mad? Did they count the hours differently in Oxford? or had the bell, in mercy to me, agreed to concentrate all its nightly doings into one continued strike?—to get rid of its work at once, and

be quiet for the rest of the night. I could not answer these queries; so I dashed down my fork, seized my trencher cap, and fled as fast as I could to the lodge, to seek an explanation of my friend the porter.

He was not at his post; but the under-porter told me that I should find him in the room above mine, which was used as a belfry. I did not choose to expose my ignorance of College matters, and my fears of being overwhelmed by my own furniture and apartments, to an under-strapper, nor did I feel disposed to venture up the staircase again until my doubts of its stability were resolved; so I walked round the square until I saw the porter descend, after the bell had ceased "Bom, bom, bomming," with a very much overgrown lantern in his hand.

"Is it you, Mr. Cuique?" he inquired, as I ran to meet him.

"I am not certain," said I, "for, to use an old joke, I feel like a double Cuique—a man beside himself. I have been frightfully alarmed. Great Tom—"

"Ah—ah—I twig—all my fault—I ought

to have warned you that, at ten minutes past nine every night, I have to pull this enormous clapper 101 times, as a hint to our 101 students to come into College and save their pennies. He does shake your room shocking; but you'll be up to him after a bit."

I thanked him for his information; and, heartily wishing him and Great Tom some hundreds of miles off, returned to my rooms; and, after I had set my things a little in their pristine order, finished my broil, and prepared for a quiet hour or two's reading.

I got on very well until the clock struck ten. The grating of the machinery, and the heavy blows on the bell, excited me and made me so nervous, that I felt convinced I should not be able to sleep at all for fear of the hourly attacks upon the tympanum of my ears. I had almost made up my mind to sit up all night, and go to bed in the morning, when a knock was given upon my oak. I sprung from my chair, and nervously hesitated to say "Come in," for fear that Great Tom himself might respond to my invitation. The absurdity of the supposition that such a heavy

fellow could have come down stairs without my hearing him descend, gave me courage to invite the knocker to enter.

It was my friend, the porter, who, with more consideration than my scout (who I suppose, from habit, thought nothing of the annoyances attached to Tom Staircase), had come up to give me his advice how to defeat the dangers of the nightly attack.

"Sir," said he, "I knows as gentlemen as sleeps here for the fust term seldom gits any sleep unless they takes my remedy and puts on a *double nightcap*."

"A woollen one, perhaps," said I; "but I assure you, I never wore a nightcap in my life. Won't a Welsh wig do as well? I have one that I bought to wear outside the coach."

"Bless your innocence!" cried Cerberus, laughing. "I never had the least notion of meaning a literal nightcap—a bag with a tassel to it— I alludes to a metty*fur*ical one."

"A sealskin travelling-cap, eh?"

"Worse and worse. In Oxford, a night-

cap is Greek or Latin for a strong glass of something warm. Try it on, sir, and, if one don't make you sleepy, try two."

Now, I had never been addicted to indulgence in nightly draughts; indeed, my poverty, if not my will, had made me a stranger to any thing stronger than a little mild ale, or a modicum of elder wine at Christmas time. I thanked the porter, however, for his advice, and resolved to follow it. I put on my kettle, and brewed myself a very stiff glass of gin-and-water, which certainly made me feel a little less nervous. The clock, however, struck eleven, and its strokes came so painfully distinct to my ears, that I tried a second, and then a third. This last dose had the desired effect; for, before I could make up my mind to undress and get into bed, I fell asleep in my reading-chair.

I was roused from a delicious dream of home and its comforts by something—I presume the clock striking twelve. "This will never do," said I. "If I drink any more, I shall be ill. I feel rather queer now — the candles seem to me to have umbrella-tops to

their wicks, and there are four of them burning; though I am convinced I only put up a pair. That horrid bell!—a capital idea strikes me; 'face your enemy, and he'll fly,' so the copy-books say. I'll go up and face Great Tom, and crack his head with the poker. Splendid notion!"

After making three unsuccessful bobs at my weapon of offence, I managed to secure it; and, taking one of the four candles, which I was surprised to find left only two on the table, I resolutely made my meandering way up the staircase, and came to a strong door on my left, fastened by a padlock. A well-directed, energetic blow with the poker made the fastening give way; and I found myself in a huge, high, hollow dome, with a spiral staircase leading to its roof, by the side of which hung a thick rope, which I felt assured was suspended from my enemy. Without the least hesitation, I rushed up; but, long before I got to the top, from going round and round with my feet, my head began to go round and round as well. I seized on the hand-rail, to save myself from falling, but

dropped my candle, which went down, spinning through the dark void like a spent rocket-stick, and lighted, without a light, on the floor below. I was so angry with it for leaving me in the dark, that I flung the poker after it and rushed on, heedless of consequences, until I tripped over a rope and fell, head first, upon a level floor, across which I rolled, like a shot out of a shovel.

I was stunned by the fall; but, when I recovered myself a little, I got up, resolved to find the bell. I put out my hands to grope my way; and felt a cold, smooth, metallic, concave surface, around which I travelled cautiously, until I caught my foot against something, which, on stooping to ascertain its nature, I discovered to be a rope. I passed my hand along it, and found it was attached by a slip-knot to a huge mass of iron, with a knot at the end, like an exaggerated college kitchen-poker.

"What *can* this be?" said I to myself. But, before I could reply to my own question, there came over me a sudden faintness and a conviction that I was *in the bell*—in the

very heart of my enemy—in the bowels of Great Tom.

I stood and trembled. A cold sweat burst out of every pore of my person. My hair seemed as if some centrifugal force had been applied to it, and that it was flying, or rather radiating, off my head, like the wig of the little men that they place on the top of an electrifying-machine. I struggled, I kicked, I screamed; I performed all sorts of contortions and gyrations in my endeavours to escape — all to no purpose. I thought I should go mad. My knees failed me, and with a deep groan I fell flat upon the floor, and knew that the knob of the clapper was within one inch of my own knob. What if the porter came to toll the students out of college? I must be smashed. What if the beam to which the bell was suspended gave way? I must be extinguished — my life put out, like the light of an inglorious mutton mould-candle. Horrible, humiliating thought!

I lay quite still, gazing up into the dark concave above me, until my overcharged imagination peopled it with all sorts of horribly-

shaped demons, clinging to the mighty clapper, grinning upon me with distended eyeballs, and jabbering at me, as if enjoying the fun my terrors afforded them. I closed my eyes—the perspiration issued more plentifully than ever from my skin, and with a desperate energy I shouted, "Porter!"

"What *ails* you?" said a deep-toned but musical voice immediately above me. "The porter is gone to snooze. Lie still, and don't kick up such a bobbery. I allow no triple bobs, major or minor, up here; except the *bobs* they tip the porter for showing me."

"I want to get out!" shrieked I; "I want to go home to my rooms."

"You won't go home till morning," chanted the sonorous voice.

"Who are *you?*" I asked, in a perfect agony.

"The mighty Tom," was the answer. "Not a man will leave his can till he hears the mighty Tom—no more *can* you."

"My dear Old Tom," said I, imploringly, "I—"

"Don't call me 'Old Tom,'" replied the

voice. "It is putting me on a level with Hodge's best, and reminds me of spirits—of which I never keep a stock up in this lonely situation—don't, old fellow."

This friendly and familiar salutation put me more at my ease; and as I could not get out of him, in one sense, I resolved to get as much out of him as I could in another.

"Coldish up here," said I, in that cool, off-handish way that one uses to get up a conversation with a stranger.

"I always take it cool," replied Tom. "I object to hot with, though some people don't—ahem! I am comfortably tiled-in; I have plenty of exercise every hour of the day—now don't it strike you?"—

"Not yet," said I, "but I am afraid it will soon."

"What do you mean?"

"Your clapper."

"My tongue—eh? Don't be afraid. I am no wag, but a most immoveable fellow. I never speak till I feel a pull upon me, and then, if they give me rope enough, I can talk pretty loudly. I am none of your light

weights, I can tell you; but what the students slangishly call a 'heavy swell,' far heavier than my brother of Lincoln. I lead here a noisy life of single blessedness."

"Then you have never been married," said I, by way of keeping up the ball of conversation.

"They have never been able to bring me to a ring yet; though they tell an absurd tale that when they attempted to do so, to celebrate the happy restoration of Charles II., I was indignant at such a liberty, gave up my situation, and *fell* through that diminutive circle of plaster ornaments that they point out under the gateway that bears my name. I believe it to be a vile pun on the name of Doctor *Fell*, who gave me this exalted situation. Great would have been my fall!—you don't fancy I am cracked, eh?"

"Certainly not," said I—"you're as sound as—"

"A bell. Good. But just wait one—"

Bang! Such a horrible blow fell upon my companion, that I sprung up and knocked my head against his side.

"Lie still," said he; "it's only the clock-hammer striking one. I am a lad of metal, and don't mind being knocked about. The hourly blows I have received ever since Dr. Fell placed me here, are only so many proofs of my soundness."

"Then you have not lived here all your life?" I inquired.

"How could I when this part of my house was not built till the middle of the seventeenth century? but I'll tell you a little of my origin; it may amuse you. My family, and a very old family it is, came, if we can believe one Polydore Virgil, from Nola, in Campania, and were all originally 'in the church.' I was cast upon the world about the year seven hundred, and baptized—"

"What!" said I, "baptized? you don't mean to say—"

"I do though; baptized and anointed too, like the kings of England—not greased, as my clapper is now—ay, and exorcised too by a bishop, to enable me to drive away spirits from mankind—like another Father Mathew. I was educated in Osney Abbey, just outside the University, with my brothers—"

"Oh, you were not an only child then?—I should have thought, from your size, that all your family had been concentrated into one of immoderate bulk," said I.

"I was certainly a very large specimen of my species, but I had six brothers, nevertheless. They baptized them Douce, Clement, Hautcleri, Austin, Gabriel, and John. Why they should not have called him Jack as well as calling me Tom, I can't think—my godfathers and godmothers could have had no taste."

"They meant it for a term of endearment—they never could have dreamt of calling you 'little Tommy.'"

"Too ridiculous, certainly. Well, as I was saying, when you interrupted me, I was rather too comfortable at Osney, for Harry, the six-wife-power king, sent all my hearers to the right-about, seized their lands, pulled down their houses, and mine with it, and transferred me to St. Frideswide's, which is now called the Cathedral. They must have had some little difficulty in bearing away the bell, though I could offer no resistance to their efforts. A scaffold was prepared for me, and I was hanged for the second time:

but I always felt in a state of suspense for fear the tower should give way and let me down. I was very glad when Doctor Fell removed me here; it is a much more respectable and roomy home; and, though dependent on a mere beam for my support, I want for nothing, not even visitors. You would really be astonished, my dear fellow, if you knew what a number of people called upon me in the course of a year. I should not dislike it, but they will, all of them, pull me about so—they use my rope like a long pole, to stir me up and set me roaring."

"And your brothers?" said I.

"Poor little fellows!—it's very degrading to the family, but I don't mind telling *you*," said Tom, in a deep whisper. "They were melted down, and are now used as pots and pans for pickling and preserving in the College kitchen —heigh ho! to what base uses we may come at last!"

"What! quote Shakspeare?"

"And why not?" said Tom. "Do you think I have lived so many years for nothing? I tell you what; though I do not despise, I

look down upon Oxford, and from my windows I have seen and heard such things as would astonish your weak mind. But you'll split, eh?"

I assured him I would not.

"Well," said he, "I like what I have seen of you. You have reposed in me—that is, you would have done so if I had not kept you awake with my chattering; and I do not mind relating to you a few anecdotes, and if you are ever inclined to tell them again, and are asked who told them to you, don't say 'Tom toll'd'—that's all."

"I promise," said I.

"Enough," said Tom. "I like that better than swearing—it's so vulgar. Now, as you cannot get to your rooms before 'daylight doth appear,' for you will break your neck down that confounded corkscrew staircase in the dark—"

"Or dash my brains out."

"Brains! good! you said brains last!—pretty well that for a freshman, but—*nunquam mens*—never mind. I'll just tell you one of my tales to while away the time.

Look out!—here comes that confounded hammer again."

The clock struck two; Great Tom responded to the blows, and then began.

CHAPTER II.

A CASE OF ABSTRACTION.

"My dear friend Tomkisson," said the Honourable Dapper Willburton—they were both Christ Church men, the former a student, and the latter a gentleman-commoner of some three years' standing—"have you seen the subject for the Newdigate; the English prize poem?"

"I have; and think it a most excellent one. 'On the consequences to the British dominions of the introduction of Chinese tea,'" said Tomkisson.

"Of course you mean to write for it?" inquired the Honourable.

"Why—really I—that is—you know I failed last year."

"But, for the honour of Westminster, try

again. You may win, and then your college and all your friends will be proud of you."

"Well—perhaps I may—but why do not *you* write for it? At Westminster you gained great κυδος for your Latin verses, and you know what Cicero says—'omnes artes.'"

"I am not quite certain that I do—but, never mind. The fact is, my tutor used to tell me that, though my ideas were very brilliant, and my phraseology particularly poetical, he had some little doubts upon his mind that they were borrowed—cribbed, I suppose, he meant; it was very impertinent of him, but somehow it has made me shy of doing poetry ever since," said Willburton.

"Pooh!—nonsense! Why the selection of choice phrases from the older writers, and a judicious remodelling of their ideas, constitutes the best poetry of modern days. I know that you used to get your themes and verses done for you now and then at Westminster, but that was sheer idleness. We all knew you could do them yourself, if you chose; do try for the Newdigate."

"Well, I will, if you will—no rivalry, you

know, only a little friendly emulation; but we must not let each other see the poems until after the prize is adjudged."

"Certainly not," said Tomkisson; "I will try—and do my best too—though I seriously hope you may win."

"It certainly would be rather pleasant to hear, when one rises in the House for the first time—to propose or second the address perhaps—the question: 'Is he a clever man?' answered by, 'Of course he is—he got the Newdigate.' It starts one well on the road of parliamentary life," said the Honourable Dapper Willburton, looking senatorically.

Tomkisson, who cultivated his friend in the hopes of using him in after-life, squeezed his arm in a most affectionate manner.

"I suppose, the sooner we begin the better?" said Willburton.

"There is no hurry. We are limited, you know, to fifty lines," replied Tomkisson.

"Ay, there's the rub. So extensive a subject will require a great deal of concentration—will it not?"

"Certainly—you must not begin *ab ovo*

by minutely describing the planting, pruning, watering, and manuring of the plant, its budding and the gathering of its leaves by the little pig-tailed women and children; but plunge at once *in medias res*, and suppose the leaves made into tea and divided into Hyson, Twankay, Bohea, and other varieties, and carefully packed in lead. I think you might venture to describe the voyage—"

"What—swanlike wings—meaning sails—urging the ponderous bulk fraught with adventurous mortals o'er the trackless deep—walking the *trottoir* of the ocean like a thing of life, and all that sort—eh? that's what you mean."

"Exactly—only you had better clothe the ideas in newer phrases. Then you can be very moral about the substitution of the innocent salubrious beverage for the intoxicating and unhealthy draughts—"

"Porter, ale, and cider, wine, spirits, and other compounds, as licensed to be drunk on the premises," said the Honourable.

"Precisely—only don't allude to them in language quite so familiar to the ear. Then

you can describe the comforts of the poor—the husband abstaining from the boisterous mirth of the sink of iniquity, to share his—"

"Pot of tea instead of beer—"

"Yes—only—"

"With his missus and the little kiddies, as they call their wife and family," said Willburton, showing an unwonted degree of poetical excitement. "Could not we introduce the cow—dappled sides—feeding in sea-green pastures—give a slight hint of the fable of Europa—have a touch at the milkmaid's cherry cheeks, and the lowing herd winding slowly over the river Lea?"

"Better not, I think," said Tomkisson, afraid to laugh at his friend; "but you can show your abilites and your horror of slavery, by venting your just indignation on the use of the sweetening medium grown under a burning sun, amidst the shrieks and groans of a fettered and lash-driven slave population."

"Yes—and recommend the substitution of lump or loaf, which is more *refined*, you know—capital idea."

"Then conclude by alluding to the pale

student over a cheering cup of the Seric juice and the—"

"Benefits likely to result to the order and quiet of the university from the abandonment of claret-cup and egg-flip. I see—I see—it shall be done," said Willburton.

Tomkisson, who was really a clever fellow in his way, and wished to give his honourable friend such hints of the subject as he might act upon, without appearing to cram him, thought he had said enough, and was about to leave him; but his friend retained his arm in his, and observed in a serious whisper—

"Mind, old fellow, no one must know that we are writing for the Newdigate, and you must not be seen in my rooms or I in yours until we have finished and sent in our poems. The world is a cruel world, and, should I succeed, my success might be attributed to secondary causes. You see my meaning? *Sic vos non vobis*—eh?"

Tomkisson allowed that he did see his friend's meaning and understand his allusion. He agreed to submit to the terms proposed, although he said it would give him great

pain to interrupt, even for a short time, their pleasant meetings in each other's rooms.

"Never mind, old fellow, we can meet anywhere else, and that will do just as well," said Willburton.

Tomkisson was obliged to look as if he thought so,—though he did not—for, to tell the truth, he was devoted to meat-pies, savoury *pâtés*, *saucissons*, and other foreign relishes; and his friend had an unlimited tick at Fortnum and Mason's.

They parted, and each went to his lodgings, for they had no longer rooms in college. Tomkisson had hired quiet apartments over Magdalen Bridge; for much depended on his reading hard for a class. Willburton had gay rooms in the High Street, because he wished for anything but to be quiet and read. Then he was sure of plenty of idlers dropping in at all hours to smoke or chat, or do anything else that idle men used to do in those remote days; he could look out of the window, and see the men go out hunting or riding, and all the coaches that passed

through the town, and lift his elbow to their well-known drivers.

When he arrived at his lodgings, he threw off his coat and neckcloth, put on a reading-gown, and sat down to meditate on his subject—for he was full of it. Presently an idea occurred to him for an opening couplet; he muttered it over to himself while he unlocked his writing-desk, spread out his paper, and mended his pen. He was just in the act of committing it to paper when a scuffling of feet was heard on his stairs, and three men rushed into his room with a view holloa. They burst out into a loud laugh at seeing the idlest man in the University sitting at his desk in his reading-gown at two o'clock in the day.

The laugh grated on Willburton's ears, and the shout annoyed his feelings. He showed it in his face.

"What, reading!—actually reading?" said one of the men.

"Writing to his lady-love," said the second.

"More likely to the governor for tin, or

to Fortnum and Mason for a *perigord*," said the third.

"I am busy, as you see, or rather about to be busy. I am beginning to write, and really I do wish you would leave me this morning," said the honourable.

"No such thing—you promised us a *saucisson* and a jug of ale before you went down the water with us, so *sonnez le tingler*, and let us commence," said one of his callers.

"I really am going to be very busy, and cannot go down the water to-day. I don't mind standing lunch, if you'll promise to leave me to myself afterwards. I am going to write, I assure you—something very particular."

"Oh, of course, if that's the case—but order up the consumeables," said another.

The private tiger soon had everything prepared, and the three young men sat down, inviting their host to do the same, but he was too much excited by the couplet in his head, which he was afraid would escape, to accept their invitations. They stood upon no further ceremony, but commenced eating, while

Mr. Willburton walked up and down the room, repeating the verses louder and louder to himself, as he thought—until these words distinctly reached the ears of his friends—

"When the good ship—'the Farquhar'—put to sea,
Laden with Twankay, Hyson, and Bohea—"

They laid down their knives and forks and shouted, "Bravo! Dapper turned poet! bravo! let us drink success to his vein poetic."

"Willburton and his poem—hurrah! one cheer more for the bohea."

"Really," said Willburton, "I was forgetful—I did not mean to be heard—I did not wish my secret to be discovered—I—"

"Oh, then there is a secret—confess—make a clean breast," said one.

"Let me see," said the second; "I can explain, I think: 'tea and bohea!' You have seen the subject for this year's prize poem? Well—depend upon it, Dapper is doing a Newdigate."

Dapper could not deny it, so he owned the soft impeachment, and begged them as a favour not to divulge the secret to any one

else, (which, of course, they promised,) and to leave him as soon as lunch was over.

In this they obeyed him, intimating their hopes that he would knock off his poem quickly, and be a brick again.

"Capital opening," said one.

"Splendid," said another.

"I would not have missed it for a pony," said the third; and all three burst into so loud a laugh just as they got into the street, that the Poet heard it clearly, though he had not the remotest idea that he caused it. He ordered away the luncheon, after finishing the jug of ale, and sat down and committed the couplet to paper. He tried a second, but could only get half another line.

"The sails were set, and—"

There he was aground. He bit his pen, ran his fingers through his hair, looked down on his boots and up on the ceiling; rose, and walked about the room; sat down again, and kicked his terrier that tried to jump up into his lap. He had heard that Poets sometimes required stimulants to bring out the ideas

imbedded in their brains, so he rang for his servant and ordered cigars with hock and Seltzer. The stimulants did their duty, and ere he had finished his first cigar he was able to complete the second couplet:

"The sails were set, and all the sailors ready;
The captain cried out 'Steady boys, there, steady.'"

Beyond this, hock, Seltzer, and weeds would not enable him to proceed. He had almost made up his mind to resign all chance of poetic fame, and generously to give his opening verses to his friend Tomkisson, when he fortunately recollected that his sister Henrietta was a contributor to an Annual, and had just done "The Undone One," to the unbounded admiration of her publisher who was delighted with lofty *names*.

To her he wrote, explaining his intentions and wishes, and begging of her to send him down, by return of post, her ideas upon the subject, expressed in a metre, of which he sent her a specimen, and not exceeding fifty lines. When he had sealed it and given it to his servant to post it, he dressed more quietly and soberly than usual, and walked down to

Hall dinner, where it was quite clear to him that his secret had not been kept by his friends of the morning, as many others wished him success in all his undertakings, and he heard several whispered titterings about "tea and Bohea."

He felt rather uncomfortable, but he looked as poetical as he could, and was consoled by the thought that he should meet Tomkisson at a wine-party in the evening, and could communicate to him the progress he had made in his verses, and the unlucky manner in which his secret had transpired. He resolved to obtain his sanction for the disclosure of *his* secret also, in order that their abstaining from each other's society, during the progress of the rival poems, might be properly appreciated.

Tomkisson readily assented to the proposition that he should be announced as a rival candidate for the Newdigate. As a matter of course, the announcement was received with loud applause, and his success drunk in "bumpers, and no taps;" to which he modestly replied, alluding in his speech to his

temerity in opposing so clever a person as his honourable friend on his right, and assuring the company that he should not have been rash enough to do so, had it not been at his honourable friend's suggestion.

Mr. Willburton, of course, thought it necessary to rise and explain, and his explanation was so satisfactory, that he was pronounced "a regular trump, and no mistake."

The president proposed that, instead of another bottle of claret, tea should be ordered, in order to test the candidates' abilities in handling the subject-matter of their poems; but his proposal was received with such audible cries of "No—no—shame—shame!" that he did not persevere, but resumed his seat.

Tomkisson retired to his lodgings early; but Willburton spent the evening at the party, where he sat late. In this he had a double motive—to show his friends that he could afford to waste *his* time, and thereby prove his superiority over his rival, and to convince them that they were not working together—

in short, that there was no collusion between them.

We must adhere to the honourable candidate for the present, and leave his rival to his studies.

By return of post the letter from his sister arrived, franked by "the governor." Dapper opened it, and found within an affectionate epistle, and a poem of fifty lines, neatly done in crow-quill. He sat down and read the verses carefully. Then he locked his door, and copied them in his own horrible scrawl, putting his dashes and blots here and there, that it might look like an original MS. Having accomplished this to his satisfaction, he burnt his sister's copy, and thought himself "safe to go in and win."

He very much wished to show the verses to his rival, and to ask his opinion of them; but he thought it would not do—he might catch an idea and convert it to his own use. He locked them up carefully, and nodded and winked mysteriously whenever he was asked how he got on. This system he carried on

for nearly a week, and then put on the idle man again, admitting to his friends that his task was done. Tomkisson said he was glad to hear it, as he had finished *his* poem, and meant to send it in on the following day.

This announcement, he could not tell why, made Mr. Willburton very nervous. Having openly set up as a rival to Tomkisson, he had a great horror of being beaten by him. He thought he could depend upon his sister's far-spread fame as a poetess, but still he thought it possible that her verses might be more suited to an Album or an Annual, than to a university *rostrum;* so at the eleventh hour he made up his mind to show them to his college tutor, and ask his opinion of them.

Mr. —— expressed his delight to hear from his blushing pupil, whom he looked upon as a bit of a reprobate, that he had written for the Newdigate. He smilingly received the MS., and begged the author to be seated while he perused the verses. He read them carefully over, and then, leaning his pale brow on his pale hand, said—"Ingenious, exceed-

ingly ingenious; but I think I have seen them, or something like them, before."

Willburton was horrified, but said not a word.

"Have the kindness to give me that Anti-slavery Gazette at your elbow," said Mr. ——. "Ah!" said he, when he had received it, "I thought so—here they are—all the same ideas, only put into new and not so efficient words. It will never do, my dear young friend; I admire your ingenuity and your humanity, but I cannot approve of—to use a mild term—your mal-appropriation of the thoughts of others. There is your MS. I wish you a good morning."

Willburton snatched up the verses, tried to say something apologetic, but feeling something like a ball of worsted in his throat, and a swimming sensation about his head, he merely bowed and left the room.

What was to be done? He went to his lodgings, lit up a cigar, and meditated. His tutor, he felt assured, would never reveal what had taken place; it was confined to his

own breast, that he had meditated imposing his sister's verses on the University, and that she had "flung him" by imposing upon him an altered-for-the-worse version of lines from the Anti-slavery Gazette. Still he had announced himself a candidate for the Newdigate, and a candidate he thought he must be, or be laughed at by a large circle of acquaintances. What if he resigned from pure motives of friendship to Tomkisson? Such an excess of friendship would never be believed. What if he unbosomed himself to his friend, and induced him to resign, and transfer his verses to him—for a consideration—the promise of patronage and a cheque on the Governor? It was a very ticklish point. Tomkisson, though poor, was proud—proud of his scholarship. The Honourable Dapper Willburton was in what is too vulgarly called a *quandary*. At last he resolved to go and call upon his friend and sound him—but very gingerly—so slightly, in fact, that if he saw his approaches to an amicable arrangement disagreeable, he might retreat immediately without having given offence.

He put on his hat jauntily, to give himself a careless air, swinging one glove in his hand after he had put on the other, and, whistling to little Vixen, the terrier, strolled down High Street, as if he was merely going over Maudlen Bridge for a constitutional walk. He nodded exultingly to all the men whom he knew, as much as to say, "I have done it—all right."

He walked up into Tomkisson's lodgings, but found he was not at home. He felt a little angry as well as disappointed; he thought Tomkisson *ought* to have been at home to *him;* he *must* have known he wanted to consult with him. He resolved to write a note and tell him so; he went to his writing-desk, selected a pen, dipped it in ink, and lifted the lower partition for a piece of paper. What meets his eyes? What makes the honourable gentleman tremble? What causes the beaver, so jauntily put on, to be lifted, as it were, from his head?—merely a small parcel, resembling an overgrown letter, directed to the Professor of Poetry, and bearing the motto, *tulit alter honores.*

Some writer upon criminalities says, "Opportunity alone, in many instances, makes men thieves." Here was an opportunity! Before the Honourable Dapper Willburton lay the verses of his friend. What if he substituted his own; or, rather, his sister's; or, rather than that, the writer's in the Anti-slavery Gazette, for them? He went to the window and looked up and down—St. Clement's was clear of any one like Tomkisson, and so was Maudlen Bridge.

He closed the window, drew down the blind, and locked the door. He was about to break the seal of the packet, when he caught the eye of little Vixen gazing upon him, as he thought — reproachfully. There was more than instinct, there was reason, in the look. He was about to drop the packet and give up his design, but, after a moment's thought, he changed his mind, and kicked little Vic. across the room under the sofa. He broke the seal, abstracted the poem, which he slipped into his pocket, and having substituted for it the pirated verses of the Anti-slavery Gazette, he sealed the parcel again, and placed it ex-

actly as he had found it. He then drew up the blind, opened the window, and unlocked the door. He wrote a short note to Tomkisson, hoping to see him to wine with him; rang the bell violently for the maid, and having given her strict orders to be sure to deliver the letter on the table to Mr. Tomkisson when he came in, took a quiet stroll to Bullingdon and back again.

When he reached his own lodgings, he sent his servant out upon some frivolous pretence, and then folded up Tomkisson's verses, without reading them, in an envelope, most mendaciously assuming for a motto: *hos ego versiculos feci*, and directed them, after enclosing his name and college, sealed up, to the Professor of Poetry.

Tomkisson came to wine, with several other men, and never had he seen his friend in such spirits. He attributed them to a consciousness of having been successful in his trial for the prize; yet he could not help fancying at times that his spirits were not genuine, but adulterated. There was a fidgetiness about him, and his laugh did not seem quite natural,

especially when one of the party alluded to a gentleman who had been hanged that morning for breaking open the seal of a letter. He noticed that he turned rather pale; that his hand trembled; and that he spilt a portion of his claret on his shirt-frill; but it might be the mere result of a vivid imagination; he might be fancying himself present at the execution, and few men can witness a fellow-man suspended from a piece of twine, for the first time, without being a little affected by the sight.

To no one, in the course of that memorable evening, was the honourable host more attentive than to his humble friend. He neglected lords and gentlemen-commoners to pay especial attention to him. He saw his glass filled every time the bottle passed—proposed his health several times in various characters—as plain Tomkisson—as a student of Christ's Church—as stroke of the racing-boat, but not as a candidate for the Newdigate. In the excess of his gratitude, Tomkisson really wished that he had not sent in his poem in opposition to his honourable and generous

friend; and, jumping up from his chair, expressed a hope that the Newdigate bearing for its motto *tulit alter honores* might not be successful. Willburton felt sure it would not—though he did not say so.

The same kindness, the same most peculiar respect and attention, did Willburton show to his friend during the weeks that intervened between the delivery of the poems and the adjudgment of the prizes. They were never apart. They seemed to live together for one another, and upon one another; though, if the truth must be spoken, Tomkisson lived upon Willburton, and greatly added to the amount of Fortnum and Mason's bill.

This friendly—excessively friendly—feeling, between two rivals for a university prize, was highly estimated by their numerous acquaintances. It was only spoken of with undisguised admiration, and gave frequent opportunities, to many of their set, to show their classical attainments by comparing them to Nisus and Euryalus, Pylades and Orestes, and other gentlemen of ancient days, who had been celebrated for the intimate and friendly

footing on which they lived with each other.

Willburton was greatly excited while he awaited the decision of the prize. Although not previously addicted to drinking to excess, it must be allowed that he drank largely while the judgment was pending. Tomkisson took it cool, and his claret cool too—as usual. He really hoped that he might fail, provided his honourable friend succeeded. He could easily whisper to his set that "he had not put out his strength, to oblige a noble family."

The important day at length arrived. A programme was issued, and the prize for the Newdigate adjudged to—a man of another college—an unknown man of a *small* college. This greatly disgusted the Christchurch men, generally; but Tomkisson felt a sort of relief that he had not succeeded against his honourable friend, and his friend was greatly relieved at the thought of his having escaped the consequences that must have ensued had he been declared the victor; for he must either have been exposed to the contempt of the university for having abstracted another's

exercise, or been the bondslave of that other for the remainder of his life.

They had a very jolly evening over their failure, and received the condolements of their friends with great equanimity. Everybody said it was at least two hundred to one against each of them, and that was "long odds" for any one to contend against—which was very consolatory.

On the following morning, a message arrived from the Dean, requesting Messrs. the Honourable Dapper Willburton and Tomkisson to wait upon him in his study. They went, as in duty bound, wondering what he could want with them; but rather expecting a rebuke for their noisy conduct on the preceding evening. They found Mr. ——, the college tutor, seated near the Dean. The tutor smiled benignantly on them as they entered; and the Dean, after shaking one of them kindly by the hand, and frowning on the other, thus addressed them:—

"Mr. Willburton, my friend, the Professor of Poetry, has, from a friendly feeling towards you, betrayed your secret, and for-

warded to me a copy of your poem. He assures me that he has had great difficulty in adjudging between you and the gentleman who has won the prize. Our house is greatly indebted to you, and you must oblige me, though the request is unusual, by reciting your verses in Hall."

Willburton would have given worlds for what players call "a vampire trap," that he might have bolted through it, and never been seen again.

"As for you, Mr. Tomkisson," continued the Dean, "you have not only been guilty of gross plagiarism, but you have copied your matter from a magazine, infamous for its heterodoxy, however famous it may be for its advocacy of anti-slavery principles."

Tomkisson stood aghast. Before he could refute the charge brought against him, Mr. —— rose from his chair, and begged the Dean to allow him to see the poem which had called forth his indignation. He cast his eyes upon it, and then upon the writer.

Willburton rushed to the door, and, before the Dean could recover his surprise at his

sudden exit, he was half way across Canterbury Quad, on his way to his lodgings.

Great was the amazement of the three gentlemen who were left together, when they discovered that the poems had changed their envelopes and mottoes. They were puzzling themselves how to account for the extraordinary metamorphosis, without subjecting the writer of one of them to a foul and dishonourable charge, when a note was put into the Dean's hands. It ran thus :—

"Mr. Dapper Willburton begs to inform the Dean of Christchurch that *he* exchanged the prize poems in a *fit of abstraction*."

Mr. Tomkisson received his reward in a first class and a college living, while the Honourable Dapper Willburton was spending his time in various cities on the continent.

CHAPTER III.

THE INSTALLATION.

——datus in Theatro
Cum tibi plausus.
HORACE, Ode xx. Lib. 1.

"What do you think of that, old fellow?" inquired Great Tom, alluding to the tale he had just told.

"Capital," I replied.

"Capital? Then why did you not applaud it? What are your hands made for, eh?"

"I could not imagine *you* could want a *clapper*. You are so full of anecdotes, and tell them so amusingly, that I wonder you have never brought out a magazine or a paper," said I.

"What, a new *Bell* Assemblée, or *Bell's* Life in Oxford? No, no: I am dependent on beams of solid oak, and not on beams from

fair ladies' eyes. I will make you the 'happy medium' of giving to the world my extensive views of Life in Oxford. Should you like to hear another story?"

"There can't be a doubt about it," said I. "Pray oblige me."

"Well, just wait until that heavy hammer pats me on the back. Here he comes—Bom, bom, bom!—there's encouragement! I'm off."

"This is abominable, shameful—I'll not endure it longer," said an irate Welsh Squire of the county of Glamorgan. "Half-past nine on a fine May morning, and breakfast not ready yet! Here have I been up these three hours, ridden round my farm, scolded all the labourers, and threatened to discharge my bailiff; and when I come home, expecting to find my wife and her niece waiting breakfast for me, I find myself waiting for them and breakfast too. I'll let them know my mind, and directly too."

Mr. Cadwallader Price rang the bell violently, and walked to the window, which was

open. The peacock came up and uttered a peculiar note, implying a request for a bit of bread.

"Go to the ——! but no, it ain't your fault. Although my breakfast is not ready, yours is. There, poor Tom," said the kind-hearted old gentleman, "there, eat that, and enjoy yourself."

The peacock picked up his crumbs, unfurled his tail, and strutted about to show his hundred eyes, as proudly as Argus.

"Confound that Wilkins!—won't he answer the bell? I will see." Pull, pull, pull —tingle, tingle, tingle. "There, I think that *must* fetch him. No! Well, here goes again. Confound the bell-pull! They don't know how to make bell-pulls now-a-days, or this would not have come off in my hands."

"Wilkins! Wilkins!" shouted Mr. Price at the door, after he had thrown the delinquent bell-pull out of the window. A triple-voiced echo, proceeding from the throats of the housemaid, cook, and scullion-wench, answered, "Wilkins, Wilkins, Wilkins!"

"Well, hur's a comin'. What dost make a pother for?" replied Mr. Wilkins.

"Master's in his tantarums, and has rung twice fit to bust the bell," said the cook.

"He's been a swearing like mad," said the housemaid. "And a holloring like winkin'," said the scullion.

"I heard hur all the time, but I know'd what hur wanted, and I could not get the urn to bile. Hur won't *hiss*, do all I can," said Wilkins, as he wended his way to the breakfast-room.

"Won't hiss?—what won't hiss, you old fool?" said his master.

"Why this here urn; hur won't hiss a bit, though hur knows her biles. Hur's as silent as the grave."

"It is tacit-urn, that's all," said Mr. Price; and, in laughing at his own shocking bad pun, he forgot to abuse Wilkins for five minutes. At last, his laughter was exhausted, and his rage broke out.

"Where is your mistress?"

"Hur don't know."

"Where is her niece, Mary Owen?"

"Hur can't say."

"Where is the postboy?"

"Hur's putting up hur pony."

"Where are the letters and papers?"

"Hur's got him in hur pocket."

"There, leave off fiddling about the table, and go and fetch the letters, and call the ladies, and go — anywhere you like afterwards."

Wilkins deliberately altered the position of every knife, fork, plate, dish, and teacup; coolly surveyed the effect of the new arrangement, and walked slowly out of the room. His master thrust his hands to the very bottom of his breeches'-pockets, whistled a Welsh air—not a very lively one — called Wilkins an old fool, and told him he would discharge him the moment breakfast was over.

Wilkins heard the threat, but he had heard it so often before that he thought nothing about it. As he happened to meet the scullion-wench in his way to his pantry, he told her to tell the cook to let the housemaid know that she was to inform the ladies'-maid that the Squire was waiting breakfast for

their mistresses. He then sauntered into the stable-yard, and, after inquiring of the letter-boy all the news he had heard at the post-town, asked for the letters. When he had carefully examined the postmarks, speculated on the handwriting of the directions, and inspected the seals, he walked leisurely into the house to deliver them; but on his way it struck him he might as well have the first look at the newspaper; so he turned into his pantry, burst the envelope, and spelt the leader, while he was pretending to air the paper. Having satisfied himself that there was no prospect of an immediate change of government, and that the funds were not likely to be affected by any political event, he took the toast-rack and the contents of the letter-bag up to his master.

"Give the letters to me, and the paper to your master," said Mrs. Price.

"Put them all down together here, by my side, sirrah, and leave the room," mumbled Mr. Price, through the folds of a large slice of ham.

Wilkins looked first at his mistress, and

then at his master; and, as he did not wish to offend either of them, gave the letters and papers to Miss Mary Owen, and vanished.

"Pack up!" screamed the Squire; "you go directly after breakfast."

"How can you, Mr. Price? Really, you put yourself in *such* passions, that, what with anger and hot tea, your face looks apoplectic at this moment. You'll have a fit, depend upon it," said the lady. "Mary, my love, give me the letters."

"At your peril!" screamed the Squire! "you—you, who are living here upon my bounty — you dare to disobey! pack up! that's all."

"Dear uncle, dear aunt," said Mary, bursting into tears, "what *am* I to do? how am I to act?"

"Pooh! nonsense, girl!—Mary—my dear child—I did not mean—there, don't cry; give your aunt all the letters directed to her, and hand the rest to me—there, don't be a fool—leave off crying—give me a kiss and another slice of ham."

Mary obeyed all the orders as well as she

could; but, as the tears made her eyes dim, she could not read the directions clearly, and gave one of her uncle's letters to her aunt.

"Delightful!" said the lady; "here is the Oxford postmark—a letter from dear Owen."

"Not directed to *you*, I'll take my affidavit; my son Owen always writes to *me*. Give it to me. Mary, it is abominable." But Mary was too much interested in the contents of her cousin's letter to heed her uncle.

"What can it matter to which of his parents Owen writes? It equally concerns us both," said Mrs. Price, as she broke the seal.

The Squire said something which sounded very like an oath, and, seizing the paper, dashed it open with his right hand, just as players think it proper to open a letter on the stage, and pretended to be deeply interested in its contents.

"Cadwallader, my dear, Owen tells us that he has taken his degree," said the lady.

"Ha! hum! he! Stocks a degree worse, I see," said Mr. Price, quoting the paper.

"And he says that there are to be grand doings at Oxford this summer. The Duke is to be installed as Chancellor."

"Ha! hum! first of May—grand procession of sweeps."

"He wishes us to pay him a visit."

"Hum! ha! the visiting justices complained of great extravagance, and——"

"He has hired lodgings for us."

"And lodged a complaint against the governor."

"Cadwallader, my dear, do you hear? Hand the letter to your uncle, Mary."

Mary did so. The old gentleman coquetted for a time; but his curiosity, and his anxiety to hear from his only son, induced him to drop his paper to read the letter, parentally and parenthetically thus:

"'Dear Governor,' (disrespectful) 'I am happy to tell you that I am now an A.B. The fees came to £17 odd' (and very dear too.) 'We are to have a scrimmage,' (what

the deuce is that?) 'a regular shindy' (oh! a slang phrase for a town and gown fight—hope he'll get thrashed) 'this term. The Duke is to be installed' (my coach-horses are in-*stall*-ed every night—ha! ha!), 'all the world will be here, so you must come up, and bring the governess' (meaning you, mam) 'and my dear cousin. Lodgings are very dear, but I have hired you a sitting-room and two bed-rooms, in the High Street, at only five guineas' (a month?) 'a day.' (Oh! Lord!—ruin—ruin!) 'You can breakfast and dine in the hall, and it will be put down in my battels' (yes—and I shall have to pay for it.) 'We shall have lots of champagne; and you may as well bring your cheque-book with you, as I should like to get rid of my ticks' (so would my sheep.) 'I don't owe much, but should not like to leave the 'varsity' (slang again) 'owing anything—but you know all about that.

'Your affectionate son,' (yes, very!)

'OWEN PRICE.'

"Know all about that. Yes," said Mr. Price. "Don't owe much—a hem!"

"Well, my love, Owen seems to have got through his career creditably."

"With a great deal of credit, no doubt. Most men do. There were Hugh Williams, and William Hughes, and Owen Roberts, and Robert Owen, your relations, madam, left it with great credit—to the amount of £1,500 among them."

"Well, my love, you had better write and say what day he may expect us."

"Do, dear uncle; I do so long to see Oxford," said Mary.

"Don't doubt it; but no, I will not go; it would cost me—let me see—post-horses, turnpikes, inns, and lodgings—it would cost at least——"

"What can it matter what it would, cost, Mr. Price? You are rich enough to afford it. You have only one child, and plenty of money, which —"

"Which I made by my own exertions. Did I not work like a slave while I was at the bar, to redeem the family estate, and buy out the button-maker from Birmingham, who was mortgagee over the property? I have

worked hard, Mrs. Price, and do not intend to squander my money away; besides, what do I care for shows and ceremonies, and ——"

"Though you are too old to enjoy such scenes, you ought not to forget that younger persons ——"

"Madam — Mrs. Price—although I am twenty years your senior, and made an ass of myself by marrying a young woman, I am not too old to enjoy myself; I can walk ten miles with any one, now—and to prove it to you, I *will* enjoy myself—I *will* go up to Oxford, renew my old acquaintances ——"

"If there are any of them left," said Mrs. Price, *sotto voce.*

"—— and drink champagne to excess, just to oblige—not you, madam, but my niece, there. Wilkins, take away, and bring me the portfolio and inkstand."

Mrs. Price, having gained her point, beckoned to her niece, and both of them left the room to look over their silks and satins, and to see what would be wanting for their visit to Oxford.

Wilkins, having cleared the table, stood before his master, and, smoothing down his gray hairs, said, "Hur's packed up, and ready to go."

"Go! you old fool, where do you mean to go?"

"Hur don't know."

"Who'd engage such a plaguy fellow as you?—an old donkey that has grown gray in my service, eh?—Go? yes, go and get what I ordered you; and hark ye, Wilkins, you must order a new suit of livery, for I mean to take you up to Oxford with me."

"Oxford!" cried Wilkins, showing as much astonishment at the notion of his master's going to that beautiful city, as if he had not heard every word of his young master's letter read. "Oxford! hur should like to see it once more, for her liked it much when hur was up at college with hur master."

"Ah, Wilkins, that's many years ago now," said Mr. Price; "yet I can recollect many scenes and many familiar faces, that time ought to have blotted out of one's memory."

"Does hur recollect carrying away the

sign of the Mitre, and nailing it over Dean Jackson's door?"

"Ah! ah! yes—well—well, it was prophetic, however. He was a bishop soon after!"

"Hur remembers, too, stealing the college laundress's board, and putting it in Surgeon Steven's window, so that every one who passed by saw plainly written up, 'Mangling done here?'"

"Ah! ah! yes—Wilkins—poor Jones got expelled for that job; he lost his gown in running away from the Proctor, and was fool enough to offer five shillings reward for its recovery."

"And hur master escaped, because her knocked down the bull-dog who was carrying hur off to college."

"You did — you did — and got your knuckles cut against his great teeth. You don't forget the town and gown fight at Carfax, on the 5th of November?"

"Hur never can; how you did knock about that big bargeman—one, two, three, down he went."

"Up he was again—right and left—there

it—he rushed in—I caught him under
arm, and hammered away at his head
r right hand."
r tried to trip you up."
ıld not, though—I was too strong for
ll of ale and spirits—animal ones, I
at last he gave in—three cheers for
n, and home to college before we were
by the Proctors; hurrah! those were
ys."

master and man had got so excited
reminiscences, that, without knowing
were sparring at one another as if
o re-enact the fighting scene. Sud-
owever, the Squire dropped his arms,
ery foolish, and, having given a loud
aid,

s is very silly; we must forget it all,
; we must forget all our youthful
go—go—fetch the inkstand and port-

ns looked more foolish than his
for, as he turned to go, he saw his mis-
d her niece standing at the door and
at the extraordinary scene which

they, unobserved by the performers, had witnessed. He ran away faster than he had ever done, since he ran away from the Proctors.

Mr. Price, after endeavouring to explain away the strong impression of his youthful improprieties, which he was fearful he had made upon the minds of the ladies, sat down and wrote to his son, to tell him the day and hour when he might expect to see him at Oxford.

"Come, Price Owen," said Owen Price to his cousin, Mary's brother, "finish that cold beef and the tankard. I must get all cleared away and made tidy before the governor arrives."

Price Owen was not very long in fulfilling his cousin's wishes. He took a long draught, and handed the silver vessel across the table to show that he had done his duty. Owen Price, finding that there was not above half a pint left, absorbed it. They were both Welshmen, and, as Oxford men firmly believe, Welshmen drink nothing but beer; though

they disguise it under the *alias* of *coorooh*, or some such queer name.

"At what hour will my uncle be here?" inquired Price Owen.

"In time for dinner. I have ordered a neat little spread from that prince of cooks, brother Jubber, to be ready in his lodgings at six o'clock."

"Where have you put them?"

"At the print-shop just opposite St. Mary's. Capital place to see everything and everybody, and very cheap, considering."

"How do they travel?"

"Post, of course; in the old family tub that the governor calls a carriage. I have taken care to secure four good horses at every stage on this side of Bath."

"*Four?* Why, uncle is doing things more liberally than usual, is he not?"

"Rather so; but when he does make up his mind to do anything out of the common way, he does it handsomely."

"Would it not be as well just to set your rooms to rights a little before he arrives?—just to put these whips, foils, and boxing-

gloves out of sight; take down one or two sporting prints, and that spinning opera dancer—eh?"

"No, no. The governor knows I indulge in little follies and fooleries, and I have no wish to play the hypocrite. There is nothing vicious in driving, riding, fencing, or sparring; and, as to mademoiselle there, he knows I never saw the original of the picture in my life."

"You don't mean to let the ladies criticize your furniture, I presume. Here's a hearth-rug!" (holding up a thing full of holes and poker-burnings). "There's a looking-glass!" (pointing to a mirror with a diverging crack across it, such as is seen on the ice, when a little boy throws a large stone upon it.) "Just look at those curtains, and that legless sofa!"

"Oh! never mind. They know that I am in my last term, and about to *third* the valuables to the next comer-up, and will make due allowances. Here, however, is a little document that will rather astonish the governor and try his temper," said Owen Price, as he unfolded a long paper with three red lines,

filled with figures, extending down to its very bottom.

"What the dickens is that?" inquired Price Owen.

"Merely a list of my ticks—that is all."

"All? What is the amount of the all?"

"Only some £749 1*s.* 5½*d.*"

"Whew!" whistled Price Owen, with his eyes starting out of his head.

"You may well whistle, considering you are almost a fresh-man. I did not think that I had contracted debts to one quarter the amount. The governor gave me a fair allowance, and I paid bills every term, but, you see—there it is—I cannot dispute an item of it. The ruinous system of ticking is injurious both to the giver and taker of credit. Take warning by this little document, cousin—mind and pay ready money for everything."

"I have done so hitherto, but I have been sorely tempted to infringe the rule I have laid down; for things are thrust upon you, as it were, and you are so politely requested to allow the sellers to book them, with an assurance that you will be allowed to consult

your own convenience as to the time of payment, that it is difficult to resist."

"The system is a very bad one. Everybody allows it to be so, and no remedy has yet been found to correct it effectually. I am weak enough to fancy that if an act were passed making University-men's debts irrecoverable in any court of law, after they had been contracted more than six months, it would put an end to the long-ticking system altogether."

"And save much misery to both vender and buyer," said Price Owen.

"But a truce to this. There are the bills, justly due to as honourable a set of tradesmen as any in the country—though it is the fashion to abuse them—and the governor must find the wherewith to discharge them."

"He will be in a terrible passion," said Price Owen.

"He will, for a time; a very little puts him out of temper; but I am not afraid; for, let him examine the bills—which he will do, for he is a man of business—and he will find none among them for the effeminacies of

Oxford life—tarts, trinkets, and trumpery—but all for manly sports and pastimes, rowing, hunting, shooting, fishing, and driving, in which he himself once delighted."

"I am grateful—especially under these circumstances—that I have as yet managed to pay my way with the income derived from my scholarship, and the allowance which my uncle, your father, kindly allows me. I owe all to you, Owen Price; for, had it not been for your kind and disinterested suggestions in my behalf, I should have been nailed to a lawyer's desk all my life."

"My suggestions were not perhaps so disinterested as you imagine. You are a mere boy of seventeen, and do not know the world" (the speaker was *nearly* three-and-twenty). "When you are as old as I am, you will look for a motive—a selfish one, too—in the actions of every man."

"I can imagine but one motive, and that only half-selfish, in which you were actuated in your kindness towards me," said Price Owen, taking his cousin by the hand.

"And that is——"

"An affection—more than cousinly—my sister Mary."

"You are right. I am not ashamed to t you that I love your sister, and on her acco was anxious to promote the wishes of h brother. We have been brought up toget from children, and her beauty, aided by h virtues and amiable qualities, have made indelible impression upon my heart."

"But my uncle?"

"Does not, I believe, suspect my feeli towards her, although your aunt, my moth I am persuaded, both sees and encoura them; but I am resolved to speak openly him on the subject, for I never have a wish conceal anything from him that is not m and dishonourable."

"Success attend you! I could not w for Mary a more desirable lot than to united to you."

"Enough. Now let us walk out and what the world—for all the world is here this occasion—is doing with itself."

The cousins walked arm-in-arm down quiet Turl without meeting a soul; but wh

they reached the High Street they found it filled with gownsmen of all ages and degrees; strangers of every rank in life, from the humblest labourer to the titled landowner; from peasant to peer; and ladies, beaming with beauty and dressed with taste and elegance, who walked or rode, attended by their assiduous swains and their watchful chaperons and guardians. A gayer scene was never witnessed; care seemed to be banished; joy sat on every face; delight beamed from every eye. The houses and shops looked as if dressed in holyday garbs, and the windows above the basement stories were filled with gazers on the merry crowd below. Suddenly the tide of strangers seemed to be ebbing from the town, and it appeared as if the High Street would soon be at low-water mark. Horsemen and carriages pressed through the foot-people, and were urged, as hastily as the crowd which impeded their way would permit, towards Magdalen Bridge.

"Make haste, or you will be too late," said a college friend to the cousins, as he was hurrying by them.

"Too late for what?" asked Price.

"To meet the Duke—come along—all the men are halfway to Iffley by this time."

With pushing and squeezing, amidst expostulations and apologies, the three young men forced their way down the High Street, and over the bridge to the London road. It was lined on either side with an uninterrupted row of spectators, between whom were stationed carriages of every description. The eyes of all were directed towards the eminence above Oxford called Rose Hill; and for some time nothing was seen but the dense mass of human beings, and the lines of carriages, waiting to greet the hero of the age. Suddenly, however, a thick cloud of dust appeared, coming like a mist over the hill; a body of horsemen was seen dashing down the ascent, and a cry of "The Duke! the Duke!" flew from mouth to mouth. The bells from every tower struck up a joyful peal, loud shouts rent the air, and caps and hats were to be seen whirling about in all directions.

A space was speedily cleared in the centre of the road by a body of gownsmen on horseback

and on foot. On came the plain green chariot containing the new Chancellor; and, as his ear caught the stormy shrieks of welcome, and as his eye gazed on the crowds assembled to greet him, his iron soul, as the papers call it, was subdued; a peculiar muscular action about the mouth, and a nervous application of the tongue to the parched lips, showed that the man who stood calmly and coolly gazing on the plain of Waterloo, while the fate of two mighty nations were suspended in the balance, was moved — painfully moved — by the excitement of the scene before and around him.

"Hurrah! hurrah! the Duke, the Duke! long live the Duke! Three cheers for our Chancellor!—hurrah! hurrah — hurrah — ah —ah!"

Amidst crushing, rushing, shrieking, and screaming, the rolling of carriages, the trampling of horses' feet, and the booming of bells, the Duke was borne to the Vice-Chancellor's, whose lodgings were the centre of attraction for the remainder of that memorable day.

Slowly and with difficulty did Owen Price

and his cousin extricate themselves from the crowd: they were heated and excited. Both were "hoarse with bawling." Each had suffered a loss; for Owen Price had lost his cap, and Price Owen had had his scholar's gown deprived of half its fair breadth and proportions.

"Never mind," cried the elder; "come along, or we shall be too late to receive the governor—an offence he would never forgive."

Away! up Cat Street, across by the Radcliffe Library, up Exeter Lane, and into the Turl, they sped; a turn to the right, a spring across the street, and they were within the college-gates. A rush up stairs into Owen Price's rooms showed them that they were in time to meet their friends, for the apartments were unoccupied.

"Come, come, Price Owen, let us dress as speedily as possible, for we look pretty objects, what with the dust, the perspiration, and the struggles we have been through."

"I have not a dry thread about me, and my mouth, throat, eyes, and ears, seemed filled with burning sand."

"Away with you, then, to your rooms; and as soon as you have made yourself comfortable and presentable, return here to meet and greet your friends; and I say, old fellow, if you *should* see a scout in quad, do just order a tankard from the buttery."

A few minutes sufficed to restore their personal appearance; and Owen Price was not a little pleased to see his cousin return, followed by a scout, bearing a huge silver cup, filled with mild ale. "The Duke!" shouted he, before he placed the vessel to his lips. "The Duke!" cried the other, ere he handed it, exhausted, to the scout; and bade him go follow their example, at his expense, in the buttery; an order of which John was not slow to avail himself.

"Hark!" cried Owen Price, "hark! I hear the rumble of wheels; that must be the governor; I can swear to that particular roll of the tub anywhere. Here they are, pulled up at the gates; let us run and meet them."

Down rushed the eager pair, four or five steps at a spring, and dashed through the portals just as the steps were being let down.

"My dear boy!" cried the Squire.

"My dear Owen!" said the mother.

"Dear brother, dear cousin," whispered Mary.

"How do ye do? how do ye do? Glad to see you. Ah! Wilkins, is that you? how are you?"

"Hur's almost choked with the dust."

"Well, never mind, you shall wash that away presently. You know the buttery—eh?"

"Hur used to know it well," said Wilkins, winking.

"It stands just where it used to stand. So, do you and Lucy go on to the lodgings, and get the things unpacked, and we will follow on foot. Postboy, drive on to the printseller's, opposite St. Mary's."

Away rumbled the tub with the two servants. The Squire, too happy at seeing his son and nephew and his old college again, had quite forgotten to put himself in a passion with the postboy for having driven too slow, or too fast—he had forgotten which. He grasped the boys' hands, gave a violent

rap on the ground with his stick, looked up and down the Turl, gazed on the college-gates, and seemed to fancy himself young again. A deep sigh, however, as he dropped his eyes, put his left arm behind his back, and walked into college, leaning heavily on his stick, seemed to show that the fancy had given place to a strong conviction that he had been dreaming of "long, long ago."

"What a room!" cried Mrs. Price. "I declare I never saw such a place in my life."

"It is rather out of sorts: but you know, dear mother, I am just going to give up my rooms—so you see I did not think it necessary to go to any expense in—"

"Quite right, boy, quite right," said the Squire. "I recollect, when I went down for good, my rooms were not much better."

"But, heavens! what a carpet!—what a rug! and Mary, my dear, do not venture to sit down on that sofa, nor on any of the chairs —they will soil your new silk pelisse!"

"Pooh! pooh! madam, sit down, I insist upon it, while I go to call on the Principal. I never came up to Oxford in my life without

going to pay my respects to the head of the college before I did anything else."

Owen Price accompanied his father to the door of the Principal's lodgings, and, when he had seen him admitted, ran back to his own rooms to take the opportunity of having a little private talk with his mother and Mary. They had a longer chat than any of them could have anticipated; but the Squire had got upon "the days gone by" with the Principal, who was a man of his own standing, and forgot the rapidity with which time was flying, until reminded of it by the college clock striking five.

A few minutes sufficed to enable the visitors to reach the apartments provided for them. The dinner was nicely served and admirably cooked. The Squire pronounced it excellent, and flew out only once to blame his son for not having ordered a brown George and a dish of sausages, forgetting that the latter were out of season, and that the former was only eaten at breakfast. He drank freely of champagne, and urged the ladies to follow his example, but left "the boys" to do as

they pleased, knowing any exhortation on the subject would be a mere waste of words. He even insisted on Wilkins's drinking one glass to the health of the Duke; but Wilkins begged to be excused, saying—

"Hur never liked *pop*, and would rather drink to his Grace in the buttery. Hur knew what ale *was* made of."

"Sorry to hurry you, my dear father, but push on the claret; we must not sit over our wine, but take the ladies into Christ Church Meadow to see the boats come in," said Owen Price.

"What! a boat-race?" cried the Squire; "bumpers round—here's success to the crews —hurrah! I remember the time when I pulled stroke myself."

"There will be no race this evening, uncle, but a splendid sight; all the boats row down to Iffley and up again two or three times, in the order of their flags."

"Flags! Iffley? I don't understand. In my days, we had no flags, and always pulled up to Medley or Godstow," said the Squire.

"Well, never mind, my dear; let us go

and see them. Come, Mary Owen will take care of you, and your brother of me," said Mrs. Price.

"And I may take care of myself, I suppose. Well, never mind. One more bumper though before we go. Oxford!—for with all thy faults I love thee still!—Oxford! glorious old Oxford! hurrah! my boys, hurrah!" The Squire drank the bumper to the dregs; and, in his excitement, threw the glass over his shoulder, and smashed it to pieces. He then seized his cane, and looked round, as much as to say, "Let any one laugh at me that dares." No one felt disposed to smile even, for his feelings were understood and respected.

What crowds filled thy meadow, oh! house founded by eighth Henry and his Chancellor, on this joyful evening! Never had Oxford witnessed such a multitude of all that is great and good in this favoured land before, and never can it again. Royalty trod the same path with the humble artisan. Peers and peeresses mingled with tradesmen and their wives. Lords were shouldered by

commoners, and ladies contended with sempstresses to gain the most favourable positions for seeing the procession of boats. Pride had forgotten its own existence, and pomposity was at a most lamentable discount.

"Here they come! Hurrah, Christ Church! Hurrah, Brazenose! Go it, Baliol!" roared the Squire. His fine, hearty voice was heard above the murmuring of ten thousand tongues, and a universal shout rent the air as boat after boat, manned by crews of as fine young men as are to be seen anywhere, swept by to the barge. Again and again was the shout raised, until Isis trembled within her sedgy banks, and enthusiasm almost grew into madness.

A crowd of young men had, as usual, filled the top of the barge. In a sudden lull of the mighty storm of shoutings, one of them took off his hat and cried, "A cheer for the Duke!" All the other cheers appeared like a mere murmur of distant waves to this. It was astounding — frightful. A dead silence followed, and men gazed in each other's faces, as though they would seek there an explana-

tion of the feelings that possessed themselves.

"Come home—come home, boys—I cannot bear it, it is too much," said the Squire, as the tears coursed each other down his cheeks. "This is worth living for; but come home — come home. What are you snivelling for, you sons of guns?"

A quiet chat over the coffee-tray closed the evening; at which Mr. Wilkins could not officiate, for he was paying his respects to the buttery-tap, and talking over old times with the aged college servants.

Mr. Owen Price did not think it right to risk the equanimity of his father by laying before him the account of his ticks on the first evening of his arrival; but, on the following morning, after a hearty breakfast in his own rooms, at which the brown Georges were not forgotten, he contrived to induce his mother and cousin to go to their lodgings under the protection of Price Owen, and prepare for the theatre, while he had a little conversation with the Squire.

"My dear father," said he, as he put the long list of £. s. d.'s into his hand, "I am afraid you will think me very extravagant; but I think it best to confess that I have exceeded the very liberal allowance you made me, and am in debt, as you will see by this paper."

"Hum — hum — let me see. Wine merchants—tailors—dinners at hotels—a new skiff — a sailing-boat — hum — hum — total amount — what? Hang me if I pay it! I never heard of such extravagance. I'll lay it before the Vice-Chancellor, and have the men discommoned. I'll expose it and you to the whole world," cried the Squire, as he laid his heavy hand upon the document, with a thump that made the breakfast things dance upon the table.

His son did not reply, but stood the very picture of a penitent spendthrift, until his father had exhausted a vast fund of vituperative eloquence, and worked off his passion. He then ventured to hint at his sorrow for his past follies; to which he added a promise of amendment for the future, and a hope

that he might not be permitted to disgrace his family by leaving the University in debt.

This last was an able thrust, which the high-minded country gentleman could not parry. After a long lecture on the impropriety of his son's proceeding, and a threat of disinheritance if he ever contracted another debt, he took a cheque out of his pocket-book, and filled it up with an order upon his bankers, sufficient to cover the whole amount.

Just as Owen Price had locked up the cheque in his desk, poor Wilkins made his appearance, looking very seedy indeed, from his overnight's indulgences, to inquire at what hour the carriage would be wanted to take the ladies to the theatre. So favourable an opportunity of getting into a violent passion was irresistible. The Squire had good grounds to go upon, he thought, and he abused his old servant as a beer-drinking sot, and told him to pack up and quit his service immediately. Wilkins listened respectfully, but without the slightest signs of contrition in his countenance; and, when the order to pack up had been repeated for the third or

fourth time, calmly said, "Hur only had a quart or two, and it was impossible hur could taste all the taps and not get a little fuddled. Hur didn't think, however, that the ale was anything like so good as it was in his honour's under-graduate days."

"Of course not," said the Squire, and talked himself cool again in proving the degeneracy of everything since *his* college days—even of the brown Georges—which he attributed to the passing of the Reform Bill, and the admission of the Roman Catholics into Parliament. He ended his oration by ordering the carriage to be at the door in less than half an hour.

As the ladies were not quite ready when Wilkins announced the carriage, Mr. Price had another excellent excuse for displaying his iracundity. He scolded his lady and poor Mary, not only down the stairs, and as they were getting into the carriage, but during all the tedious half hour that it took the postboy to drive them, about five hundred yards, to the gates of the theatre. Mrs. Price took no notice whatever of her husband's harangue, but

amused herself by looking at the crowds of carriages and the throngs of people that filled Broad Street. Poor Mary, who was sadly afraid of her uncle, would have burst into tears at some of his severe remarks, had not her cousin been present to give her courage to endure them. Even his presence might not have sufficed to repress her rising tears, for the snail's pace at which they progressed made the Squire more irritable than usual; but fortunately for her the pole of the carriage next to them in the rank was driven with such violence against them that it crushed the back panel, and justified the owner in calling to Wilkins to get down and let him out, in order to rebuke the coachman for his gross carelessness; from which he was diverted, however, by the apologies of the ladies who filled the interior of the offending vehicle.

At length Mrs. Price and her niece were placed under the charge of one of the pro-proctors, and escorted into the theatre, where they were soon seated in the centre of the ladies' gallery. The Squire went round to

the door leading to the area which is set apart for masters of arts and strangers; and Owen Price, with Price Owen, who had been riding on the rumble with Wilkins, joined the throng of men who had to make their way into the under-graduates' gallery.

Mr. Price's temper was not improved by having to stand for nearly an hour in a dense crowd, waiting for the doors to be opened. He made many indignant speeches to his neighbours on the right and left; but, as they had not been introduced to him, they did not think it necessary to reply, which made him still more angry. At length, however, the bolts were withdrawn, and the doors thrown open. A rush ensued, and with a feeling of suffocation, a sense of painful oppression on his lungs, a throbbing of the heart and temples, as though they were about to burst, the Squire found himself in the midst of the area, and gazing on such an assemblage of beautiful women as he had never seen before.

The sight calmed his boisterous temper for a time; but the heat was so great, and the crushing so fearful, that he was about to

force his way out of the building, when a noise was heard like the charge of heavy cavalry over rocky ground, or the rumbling of a volcano before an eruption. The mass of people in the area, which had been waving to and fro like a corn-field in a gale of wind, stood immoveable, wondering what the awful sound could portend. Louder and louder it grew. Shrieks, cries, and groans were heard, mingled with the crash of broken glass, and loud shouts of "Go on, go on—air, air, give us air—break every window!"

The doors leading to the under-graduates' gallery had been opened, and the young men, eager to gain front seats, were so crowded together on the narrow staircases, that they impeded one another's progress. At length they gained the gallery, and rushed in with loud shouts; some had lost their caps, others had had their gowns torn off their backs—all were as wet with perspiration as if they had been dragged through a field of Swedish turnips on a dewy morning. What cared they for that? As soon as they had filled the gallery, they agreed to fill up the time that was

to elapse before the Chancellor would appear. The name of some political character was mentioned and received with shouts of applause, or groans and hisses, according to the estimation in which he was held by this portion of the rising generation of England. Then followed the names of the Univerity authorities, the Vice-chancellor, Proctors, Pro-proctors, and Heads of Houses. The crews of the various boats were proposed amidst loud hurrahs, and then "The Ladies!" which elicited such a shout as fairly astounded the fair causers of it.

"Silence, silence! the Duke, the Duke!" screamed a man from the area. The theatre was as silent as the grave—a pin might have been heard to fall. The organ struck up a joyous air—the large doors in the centre of the building were thrown open. The procession entered, and Wellington took his seat in the Chancellor's chair.

What pen can describe the awful excitement of that moment! It was fearful—men cried as they shouted; the ladies stood trembling with agitation, as the tears ran from

their eyes; and for some ten minutes the Duke sat, nervously touching his parched lips with his tongue, and seemingly deeply affected by the scene before him.

At length he rose to open the business of the convocation. It was a signal for renewed shouts, which lasted so long, that he turned his eyes imploringly to the galleries, and was aided by the authorities present in trying to procure silence. All in vain—shout after shout rent the air, until the men were completely exhausted, and gave in from a physical inability to continue.

It is not my intention to give a detailed account of all that occurred on this memorable occasion. It is fresh in the memory of thousands, and will never be forgotten by those who witnessed it. One circumstance I must record, for it made such an impression upon me as no lapse of time can erase. Among the many odes recited in the theatre, complimentary to the Chancellor, was one written and spoken by a clever youth, who ably alluded to all the scenes in which the Duke had been engaged. A vivid and heart-

stirring description of all his achievements in India, Spain, and France, was listened to in breathless silence; but, when he ended his ode with the talismanic name of Waterloo, three thousand human beings rose as one individual, so simultaneous was the movement, and a shout was raised that was heard distinctly on Headington Hill. The Duke is said to have wept from excitement.

But I must return to my party.

Mr. Cadwallader Price had been one of the most energetic actors in the scenes I have faintly portrayed. He had shouted until he was hoarse, and applauded until his hands were sore. Had any one in his vicinity ventured to give utterance to a dissentient sound, he would assuredly have knocked him down; but, as everybody was almost as enthusiastic as himself, he left the theatre in good humour with all the world, and waited for the ladies, the young men, and the carriage, without a murmur.

As soon as a change of dress was effected,

which was rendered necessary from the heat of the theatre, Owen Price took his friends to —— College, where he had an invitation to an archery meeting and a luncheon in the gardens. The shooting was said to have been remarkably well executed; but, as Owen Price rather despised such performances, he amused himself with talking to his pretty cousin, until the "gentlemen sportsmen" laid aside their bows and arrows and escorted their fair visitors to the pavilion, where refreshments were prepared for them.

Pop—pop—pop—a perpetual popping was heard, as bottle after bottle of champagne was uncorked; indeed, so much of what was called champagne was imbibed in Oxford during this Commemoration week, that the price of perry rose in Herefordshire to an unprecedented height.

Mr. Price was thirsty; the wine was nicely iced. He drank with every lady near him; and when he had exhausted his fair friends, he challenged the gentlemen, and then began to cut jokes and make puns, and finally to

deliver complimentary speeches, which he might have prolonged to dinner-time, had not the gentlemen left him to resume their shooting, and taken the ladies with them; so that he was left with only one auditor, his unfortunate nephew, Price Owen, whom he held fast by the button of his coat until his oratory was exhausted.

A dinner at six o'clock, in the College Hall, was followed by a dance. Of course champagne flew about as liberally as possible, and of course the elderly gentlemen who did not join in the dance amused themselves with a quiet talk and a little claret in the common room. Old stories were raked-up, former pranks recorded, and many a sigh heaved to the memory of companions now "withered and gone."

To say that Mr. Price was in the least degree tipsy would be false, but he was excited by the events of the day, and a little overcome by the strength of his feelings and the number of toasts he had drunk. When eleven o'clock came he retired to his lodgings, with all his party, in one of those queer hu-

mours that men are wont to fall into when they have taken a little too much, and not quite enough to make them see everything in its brightest light. He was rather sleepy, and very prosy between his short naps. He would not go to bed, but would have a glass of soda water, and would give a long account of all the proceedings of the day, as he sipped it. At length he talked himself to sleep, and his son took the opportunity of begging his cousin Mary to sit down to the piano-forte and sing him a song.

Mary could not refuse. She struck a few chords, and was about to begin a little Welsh air, when her uncle woke up, and expressed his surprise that anybody should think of making a noise at that time of night, when, it was very evident, he was tired and anxious to go to bed. "But it is just like you girls—always wanting to show off!"

Mary explained that she was going to sing merely to oblige her cousin. Mrs. Price corroborated her explanation, and Owen Price and Price Owen gave their evidence to the same effect. The black cloud of ill-humour,

however, had spread itself over the mind of the old gentleman, and he grew so cross and peevish at last, that his wife took her niece by the arm and led her from the room.

"There—there," said the Squire, "that is the way in which I am treated—not even a parting word—not even a good night."

"My dear father; Mary—"

"My dear uncle, my sister, I am sure—"

"Is a good-for-nothing, ungrateful hussy. I will rid my house of her, and turn her out into the world to gain a livelihood as a governess."

Owen Price was "a chip of the old block;" and his passionate disposition, which, according to some theories, he must have inherited from his father, was more uncontrollable than usual, from the excitement caused by the day's proceedings, and the uncalled-for severity of the old gentleman's remarks. In spite of all his cousin could do to prevent him, he "made a clean breast of it," as Old Bailey counsellors call making a confession, and revealed to his astonished paternity his love for his cousin, and his full de-

termination to make of her a Mrs. Price junior.

Cadwallader was too angry to speak; he whistled vehemently for some minutes, and then rushed to the door, and screamed for his wife and niece to come back immediately. They, thinking that something very serious was going on, quickly made their appearance, and demanded the cause of their being summoned so loudly.

"Ask that young gentleman, madam, who is walking about there like a poet in a fit of inspiration," said Mr. Price, thrusting his hands, according to his custom when enraged, to the very bottom of his pockets.

"What is the matter, my dear Owen?" said the mother.

"Cousin Owen, what have you done to offend your father so grievously?" inquired Mary.

"Only what I ought to have done long since—confessed my love for you, and my full determination to make you mine. I know that our affection is mutual, and that my

good mother will not throw any obstacles in the way of our union."

Owen seized Mary's hand as he spoke, and she threw herself upon his shoulder and wept. Mrs. Price and her brother bade her be comforted, and not give way to her tears.

"There, madam, there — you hear him; you see him — all this is vastly agreeable, when you, he, and she, know very well that I had set my heart on his marrying Miss Dorothea Williams, the owner of Dingley Park, that joins on to my estate — three hundred acres of freehold land, and without an incumbrance—you know it, madam."

"I know nothing of the sort," said Mrs. Price.

"Then you ought to have known it by instinct, madam!" said the Squire, bouncing his hand on the table.

"Dorothy Williams, sir!" cried Owen Price; "why, she is an old lady — thirty, if she is a day."

"Yes, sir, and has a thousand pounds in the funds for every year she has lived."

"I will not marry *her*, I am determined! If I am not allowed to marry my dear Mary here, I will live single all my life, and extinguish our branch of the family tree," said Owen Price.

"Owen, dearest Owen, do not provoke my kind uncle. Say no more to-night, and permit me to retire," sobbed Mary.

"Ay—retire—go, go—but hear me before you go. I shall order the carriage to the door at nine o'clock to-morrow morning, to leave Oxford. You will all be ready to accompany me, or dread my severest displeasure."

Vain were expostulations or entreaties; the old gentleman remained firm, and Wilkins was sent for from the buttery, and sent, half intoxicated, and totally disgusted, to the Mitre, to order four horses on to Farringdon at nine in the morning. Lucy, who was tired to death with the gaieties of the day, was ordered to pack up immediately.

"Now, madam, you and your niece will be good enough to retire; and you boys will go home to your rooms, and be ready punctually

at nine in the morning. I shall order a chaise for you and your luggage to precede us, for I shall not lose sight of you."

The ladies, or rather the elder of them, tried her eloquence to induce her husband to remain and see the ceremony of the Installation completed; but the rage into which such a monstrous proposition, under the circumstances, threw the Squire, induced the whole party to obey his orders without further remark.

Owen Price would have followed the ladies, and endeavoured to persuade his cousin to elope with him that very night, and solicited his mother to accompany her as bridesmaid, and his cousin, Price Owen, to ride in the dickey, to be prepared to act as a father to give her away, using the cheque intended to pay his college bills to defray all the expenses to the north and back, had not his father put on his hat and insisted on seeing them to the door, and into the High Street, which he did just as Mr. Wilkins managed to stagger up to it, and say that the horses would be at the door at the hour named.

"What can be the matter with my uncle? I have seen him in a passion — a violent one, too — but I never saw him in such a rage as this before. He seems more like a madman than a rational being," said Price Owen.

"I cannot tell, unless the common-room wine has disagreed with him, or the champagne turned acid on his stomach," said Owen Price.

"Did he never suggest to you his wish that you should marry Dorothea Williams and her three hundred acres before?"

"Never. My dear fellow, you never saw Dorothy, did you?"

"Never."

"Well, then, you never saw a plainer person in your life. She is half-educated, as vulgar as a housemaid, and as ugly as old Wilkins. If I marry her, may I—!"

"Say no more, but let us hope that a night's rest and pleasant dreams may yet induce the governor to forget his anger, and stay out the Installation."

Morning came; and the young men, having risen early to get their portmanteaus packed,

went to the lodgings of Mr. Price. He was up and ready to receive them, in a much worse humour than he had displayed on the previous evening. Mrs. Price assured them that she had not had an hour's sleep, as he had tossed and tumbled about in bed all night long, and talked of nothing but Dorothy Williams, three hundred acres of freehold property, thirty thousand pounds in the funds, and a very odd sensation about the pit of his stomach. Mary made the breakfast without saying a word; but her eyes showed that she had been crying. Wilkins walked the room as if eggs were strewed on the carpet and he was afraid of treading on them; and Lucy, the ladies'-maid, trembled when she came into the room.

"The bill!" screamed the Squire.

Wilkins flew, and returned with the print-seller, bearing the document in his hand.

"Infamous!"

"Really, sir, considering the few Installations that do occur in a man's life, I think—"

"And what business have you to think?

There's your money, sir, and I hope it may do you good."

The printseller bowed, and retired hastily.

"Why is not the carriage at the door?"

"Hur is," said Wilkins.

"Then why didn't you say so?"

"Hur hadn't a chance."

In a few minutes all were embarked; and the heavy tub, preceded by a hack-chaise, took the road towards Bath, up the High Street, just as the gay crowds were assembling to go to the theatre, to view the second day's proceedings of the Installation.

Mrs. Price ventured to hint to Mary how much she should like to view them, when the angry Squire thrust his head out of the carriage-window and bade the boys drive faster, on pain of forfeiting their tips.

At every stage they travelled through, the Squire's temper got worse, and he complained, first of a severe pain, he could not tell where; at last, he confessed that he was ill—very ill—and had a most uncomfortable sensation in the ball of his great toe, for which he could not account. When they arrived at the York

House, in Bath, where they were to stop for the night, he went to bed at once, and a physician was sent for.

Dr. —— came, and was announced, but the Squire said "he would not see him or anybody. Bring me the paper, Wilkins, and do not let me be interrupted."

Wilkins brought the "Bath Journal," and sat down in the arm-chair by the bedside. For a few seconds all was quiet. Suddenly the Squire cried out, "Send for the doctor; I may as well let him poison me off at once, for all my hopes are ended — my plans are frustrated; that old cat, Dorothy Williams, has married her lawyer!"

It was true—Dorothy had eloped extraordinarily.

Dr. ——felt his patient's pulse, asked him a multitude of questions, and, putting on an extra solemnity of face, pronounced the disorder to be an attack of gout.

"Gout?— impossible! I never had it before in my life," said the Squire.

"Very probably," said Dr. ——; "but, when elderly country gentlemen go up to

Oxford to witness an Installation, and indulge in under-graduate champagne, they must not be surprised if a fit of indigestion is converted into a fit of the gout."

Mr. Cadwallader Price was so very comfortable when the gnawing of ten thousand rats was no longer felt at his great toe, that he placed Mary's hand in his son's, and bade them be as happy for the remainder of their lives as he was at that moment.

The cousins never regretted the Squire's visit to the Installation.

CHAPTER IV.

BABBINGTON DRONEHAM, THE QUIETEST MAN IN COLLEGE.

——— Impium
Lenite clamorem, sodales.
HORACE.

"You are not gone to sleep; indulging in sweet oblivion, as fine-talking ladies say?" inquired Great Tom.

"I am as wide awake," said I, "as a detective-service police-officer on a dangerous duty."

"But you don't laugh," said Tom.

"I respectfully beg leave to contradict you," I replied; "I laugh within myself."

"Within *me*, you mean."

"Both. I am afraid to give vent to a regular burst."

"Afraid? Why?"

"Lest I should bring down the weight of your heavy displeasure upon me," said I, "and extinguish myself for ever."

"Pooh—pooh! I am sound enough—as right as a mail-coach. I wish I may be shot if I ain't! These words remind me of a man who was up here—I don't mean in this belfry, but up in college—some years since when there *were* such things as mail-coaches, whose guards called 'all right,' and whose drivers kept time to a second. He was a nice young man—very particular nice. Shall I tell you his story?"

"If you will excuse me now," said I, "I would rather——"

"Cut and run—slip off into bed? I see—but you have not a chance. You have taken an inside place in my *rotonde*, and here you stop until Nox has done his work, and given up the reins to Phœbus Apollo."

"Then the story, by all means; for it's very hard lying—"

"I am glad to hear you say so. Some men find it easier than speaking the truth."

"I mean lying here upon the floor," said I.

"Few men like to be floored, and as this

is your 'first appearance on these boards,' I have no doubt you feel a little queerish; but never mind, consider it a night rehearsal, when there is no fear of apples, orange-peel, or hisses from boxes, pit, or gallery."

I began an expostulation, but the confounded hammer came down "Bom! bom! bom!" and as soon as the awful sound had made its escape through the windows to let the Oxford people know what o'clock it was, Tom commenced his kind tale thus:—

In a retired spot near the borders of Wychwood Forest lived one Mr. David Droneham. He cultivated his own estate—a small farm of some two hundred acres; that is, he fancied *he* cultivated it, though in reality the whole was under the management of a working bailiff. Giles Darman, though he was called a farming servant, was really his master's master, and a very despotic master he was. David Droneham was a great agriculturist in theory; Giles Darman despised theory, and relied entirely on practice. If the master, who took in all the publications relating to agriculture that were

issued, hebdomadally, monthly, and annually, from the press, and was frequently taken in by the writers of them, ventured to purchase any new implement which was to work wonders at half the cost of time and labour required by the old implement, his man invariably pretended to be struck by its ingenuity and utility, and to have it damaged in some way or other the very first time its powers were tested. If a piece of wheat was to be drilled, the patent drill was sure to be found minus a wheel or an important screw, or something or other. If a rick was to be thrashed out in a day, the machine was sure to be out of order. The patent plough was noseless after a ten minutes' trial; and as to artificial manures, Giles had a method of rendering them valueless, and grinned maliciously in his master's face as he pointed out to him the "dead failure" of the acres on which they had been used.

David Droneham was vexed at the little success which attended his introduction of all the newest inventions, but he was not to be easily defeated. He tried and tried again,

until his machine-maker's bills for new engines and repairs of the same consumed the profits of the farm, and left him without an income to live upon.

Giles Darman grinned the more maliciously when his master proved to him from his books that he was losing money, and of course attributed it to his folly in not being satisfied to go on as his forefathers had done before him. The master uttered a bold *negatur*, but the man undertook to prove the truth of his premises and conclusion. A most illogical quarrel ensued, which ended in Giles Darman's being turned off by his indignant master, and another bailiff, a north countryman, an advertiser in some Farmer's Gazette or Journal, who boasted of having thoroughly acquired a knowledge of the theory and practice of agriculture, being engaged at a high salary in his place.

David Droneham would have been happy with his new bailiff, whose opinions so closely accorded with his own: but, whenever a new experiment was to be tried, a new live-labour-saving machine to be tested, the experimen-

talist was sure to see the face of Giles Darman, with a most contemptuous sneer upon it, grinning at him and his bailiff through the barn-doors, or a gap in a hedge-row. In vain did he warn him off his premises, serve him with notices of actions for malicious trespasses, and have him up before the magistrates. Giles despised the warnings, lighted his pipe with the notices, and showed a sovereign contempt of court as he paid his fines to the magistrates' clerk.

Unluckily, the season proved unfavourable to mangel-wurzel, Swedish turnips, and Italian rye-grass. The cattle, too, were blown by getting access to a field of patent clover that was to yield some ten or twelve tons to the acre; and at the gathering of the harvest the patent wheat, drilled in a patent way, was found to yield a mere nothing. Sad was the heart of David Droneham when he was compelled to acknowledge to his new bailiff that he must decline his valuable assistance for the future, from want of means to pay him his high salary, and to carry out his ingenious theories.

The bailiff could do no more than express his sorrow at being compelled, by adverse circumstances, to quit a master who was possessed of a mind so thoroughly unfettered by old-fashioned prejudices, and ask him for a written opinion of his conduct and abilities. This was readily given; and as David Droneham shook the experimental bailiff by the hand at parting, he heard a loud laugh in his rick-yard, and saw Giles Darman dancing with delight on the top of a patent winnowing-machine, and throwing his arms about like the sails of a windmill.

David was in a great passion, as well he might be. What should he do? Shoot him? It was a dangerous experiment, and might be attended with serious results. Should he let the great dog loose, and set him at him? Pooh! Tiger knew Giles better than his own master, and would not even show his teeth at him. He made up his mind to give his men a quart of his strongest beer all round, to thrash him with their flails; but he recollected that all the flails had been superseded by a patent thrashing-machine, and that his

men were in a sulky, rebellious mood at the introduction of his new-fangled nonsenses, which they firmly believed were invented to rob them of their means of living. David Droneham, therefore, wisely contented himself with shaking his fist at his tormentor, and rushed into his parlour to hide his indignation, and to examine into the state of his affairs.

The result of the examination induced him to put the writings, as title-deeds are called in the country, of his little estate into his pocket, and ride over to Charlbury, to consult his attorney about raising a certain sum of money upon them, to relieve him from his most pressing embarrassments.

The lawyer promised to supply "the needful," but at the same time seriously advised his client either to let the farm, and live upon the rent of it; or to take Giles Darman into his service again, and permit him to manage it on the old and successful plan. To the latter proposition a decided refusal was given: "he would die sooner than give such an impudent fellow such a triumph over him."

To the former plan, after much proing and coning, he assented: the farm was advertised to be let, and within ten minutes of the appearance on the barn-door of the bill which proclaimed the fact to the world of Wychwood, Giles Darman was in his former employer's parlour. *He* offered to become his tenant, and put down half-a-year's rent in advance! This was too much: David looked at Giles, and at the yellow canvas bag that contained the money — money saved in his own service — and with a fearful oath bade him leave the room.

Giles only grinned: his old master rose from his seat, and bade him begone. Giles began an argument, but, before the first proposition had passed his lips, a huge leaden inkstand flew through the air and knocked him down. Before he could scramble up again, and cleanse his eyes and mouth from the ink, that filled them like an overflow of the river Niger, he felt a heavy horsewhip applied to his arms, back, head, legs, and face, as, in his convulsions and struggles to escape the blows, each part presented itself

to the view of the angry inflictor of the punishment.

Giles escaped as soon as David was exhausted, and presented himself in a shocking plight before the nearest magistrate, and demanded a warrant for the assault. The worthy justice, who had had to inflict many penalties on Giles for wilful trespasses upon his former employer's grounds, and knew what an impudent, aggravating rogue he was, refused to grant the warrant upon his mere *ipse dixit*, and without corroborative evidence. Giles first expostulated, then became abusive, and, at last, was turned out of the house by the magistrate's servants; who, in reply to his recitation of his ill-treatment, consoled him by telling him, in the words of a Wiltshire jury's verdict, that "it sarved him right."

Giles took his revenge thus: he stationed himself in the road that led to David's house, and accosted every farmer who rode over to look at the land to be let; and, after telling him that he had been bailiff on it for many years, left him with a full assurance that the farm

was not worth above half the rent that the owner asked for it. The consequence was, that David Droneham failed to get a tenant, and, from persevering in his new system of farming his land upon his own account, he became more deeply involved.

More money was advanced upon "the writings;" but David Droneham knew that such a mode of proceeding must ruin him at last. But what could he do? No one would take the farm, and he began to be convinced that he could not make it profitable himself unless he gratified Giles Darman, by returning to a system which he had deprecated and despised. That would never do. He thought and thought again, until it occurred to him that he might carry on the farm upon scientific principles, triumph over his old bailiff, and repay the moneys advanced upon the writings. How? By marrying a lady with the wherewithal.

David Droneham was doubly a widower: he had been married twice, and was rather advanced in life. Unlike his estate, he was without an incumbrance. He had never had

a child. David looked in his glass, and although he saw reflected a remarkably squat person, surmounted by a very ugly face, he did not despair. He dressed himself in his best white cords, newest top-boots, sprucest blue coat, and ordered his horse. Before he mounted, he bade one of his men catch a very fine peacock that was spreading its tail on the lawn, and bear it before him to the house of a wealthy widow lady, who dwelt on the confines of the pariah of ———. The Widow Babbington, he knew, greatly admired this bird, for he had often seen her drive her pony-carriage slowly by his door to gaze upon its beauties. He was resolved that the bird should be the basis on which his claims should be rested, and thought it would do for a love-bird, as well as a Venus's dove.

The bird was conveyed safely, and David saw his man place it on the grass-plot before he knocked at the door. He saw the widow come out, and admire the proud bird as it strutted about with expanded tail. "Now or never," said he; and, ere she was aware of his presence, he was at the widow's side. An

invitation to drink tea was given and accepted; and David Droneham made such good use of his opportunity, that the widow thought him much less like an ourang-outang in the face when he left her, than she did upon his arrival. "*Repetatur haustus*," said David to himself, and the following day saw him at the widow's, to inquire after the peacock. Argus, with any one of his hundred eyes, would have seen that the widow was pleased with his polite attentions. David stayed to dinner and tea, and before supper had begun the siege in due form. The outworks were completed before he left, and in less than a month the citadel was taken. The peacock was carried back to its former home on the top of the carriage which conveyed its master and mistress from the parish church.

For six weeks David was a happy man, for he travelled about from place to place with his wealthy wife, and visited every model-farm he could hear of in his route. When he returned home from the wedding trip, he told his lady of all he meant to do in the way of farming. The north-country experimental

bailiff was to be sent for immediately, and an extensive order given for new patent ridging, turnip-cutting, and other machines, and wonders were to be done upon the land.

The lady listened attentively to all his plots and plans; and when they were fully disclosed to her, quietly told him that he should not play at ducks and drakes with *her* money, and squander it away, as he had done his own, upon a parcel of tomfooleries.

David was amazed; but he was still more amazed when he heard Mrs. Droneham recommend him, as the best thing he could do, to take Giles Darman into his service again, and let him manage the farm in his own way.

"I'll suffer any torments sooner than consent to take that impudent fellow into my employment again. I never will consent to such a thing," said David.

"Yes, you will, my dear, but take your own time about it."

David held out for three long months, and then gave in. Mrs. Droneham had held a private talk with the village doctor, and en-

gaged a respectable old lady to be ready by about a certain day to take up her residence with her for a month or six weeks. He was likely to become a parent! and Giles Darman had touched his hat respectfully as he complimented him on the pleasing prospect. All his former impudence was forgotten and forgiven. He was re-elected bailiff, and allowed to plough, sow, and thrash, as his forefathers had done before him. From that day David prospered, although he privately attributed Giles Darman's success on the farm to the mode in which he had tilled the land, while *he* had the power of cropping it and manuring it on scientific principles.

In due time a boy was born to his happy parents; in due time he was christened, and called by his mother's name of Babbington, which was also her maiden name, as she had married her first cousin. The little fellow throve and grew rapidly, and was one of the quietest and best-conducted children at the age of ten years that could be found in the neighbourhood of Wychwood Forest. Then, alas! he lost his mother, who took care to have all

her fortune settled upon her child, fearing lest David, as soon as he was a free agent, should make ducks and drakes of it by resuming his tomfooleries. The widower-for-a-third-time had no such designs. He was cured of his rage for novelties by prospering under the old system; but then he would call Babbington "a *model* child," and that made his mother suspect that he was secretly thinking of a "model farm."

Master Babbington Droneham had never been out of his mother's sight since he was born, except when he was in bed; and then, to be safe, he slept in a sort of closet within her own room. He had been petted, though not spoiled, in the usual sense of that word. She had taught him nearly all she knew herself, so that he could read, write, and cipher, as well or better than most children of his age. All boyish sports, however, had been forbidden. Bats, balls, tops, and marbles, he knew only by name; but he could amuse himself with a needle, a pair of scissors, and a sheet of paper, as well as a little girl; and could cut ladies out of pocket-books, and

colour them to the life. All his pursuits had been sedentary; for he never went out but with his mother. He was not allowed to stroll about the farm with his father, lest he should get his clothes dirty and his feet wet. In short, he was what Giles Darman pronounced him to be—"a little mollycoddle."

Giles resolved to, what he called, "save the boy, and make a man of him."

"I wonder, sir," said he to his master, "that you don't send that little fellow out to school."

"Never, Giles—his mother's wish was that he should be educated at home, and then sent up to Oxford," replied David Droneham.

"To be made a parson of, I suppose."

"Your supposition is a wrong one, then; Master Babbington Droneham is to be brought up as a gentleman, like his father."

"Upon scientific principles?" inquired Giles. His master gave Giles a look that reminded him of a certain leaden inkstand and a heavy horsewhip, so he said no more on that subject.

"I really think the young gentleman (a stress on the latter word) looks as if he wanted fresh air. His cheeks are as white as a turnip, and they tell me he don't know a plough from a harrow. If you were to let him walk about the farm with you, sir, it would do him good."

"His mother always dreaded damp feet," said the father.

"Then order him a thick pair of boots, sir; rely upon it, a little out-door exercise will do him good."

David Droneham thought the matter over in his mind, and felt convinced that what Giles had suggested was the best plan to pursue. Master Babbington, therefore, soon appeared in a dress suitable for following his father to the field; and, when once the boy had fully tasted the sweets of freedom and fresh air, nothing could keep him within the house. He was here, there, and everywhere, in fine weather and foul; and, as he had no playfellows meet for him, he associated with the plough-boys and men about the farm. They were astonished at his gross ignorance of

all boyish sports, and earnestly set about initiating him into the mysteries of taws and alleys, cricket and football, and such other games as they themselves delighted in. Giles, moreover, "put him up to" a great many things of which he had better have remained ignorant altogether, or, at all events, for many years to come; for he taught him to ferret rats and rabbits, to trap birds and wire hares, and even to shoot flying; but, worst of all, to do all these things, and never to let his father or anybody else know that he could do them.

This was the boy's first lesson in the art of deceiving, and so well did he learn it, that neither David Droneham, nor any of the family within doors, had the most distant notion how his time was employed. If he robbed the henroosts and sucked the eggs, he put back the shells and gave the rats the credit of the robbery. He kept ferrets and rat-dogs, but it was down at Giles Darman's cottage. His gun and his fishing-tackle were never seen at home, and he always had a tale ready to account for any extraordinary absence from the house or any peculiar appear-

ance in his outward boy. To the servants and his father he appeared unchanged, except in his healthy looks and daily-strengthening frame. If he went out with his father to spend an evening with a neighbour, he was so well-behaved and smooth in his demeanour, and so very innocent in his remarks, that he acquired the title of the quietest little boy in the county.

Giles was quite delighted with his success as a tutor, but did not think his pupil's education completed, until he had taught him to smoke and drink with him, and sing "'Tis my delight of a shiny night," with proper emphasis and due effect. The boy soon acquired these arts, and could manage a pipe and toss off his glass as well as his tutor. But at home he never indulged in the least excess. If he got a little excited at Giles's cottage, he stole home by a backway, and crawled up to bed, pleading a headache in excuse.

For two years the boy was left to the evil influence of Giles Darman, and had become, unsuspected, a most perfect little scamp. Only

once did he forget the lesson of dissimulation taught him by his tutor. A neighbour who had been dining at the farm, as he sat over his wine, of which Babbington had quietly and unobservedly taken a larger share than ordinary, remarked that he was annoyed by his pointer having taken to killing his own mutton.

"Cure him in five minutes," cried the boy, in a tone that no one but Giles had ever heard before. "Shut him up in a barn with an old ram, and he will either butt his breath out or give him a lesson he will never forget. He won't look a grass-nibbler in the face again."

David Droneham and his guest stared at the quietest little boy in the county; but Babbington saw his mistake, resumed his quiet tone instantly, and meekly told his father that he had found the prescription in a dictionary of agriculture. He then left the room, and ran down to Giles to tell him how he had "queered the old ones."

"Grass-nibbler! hum!" said the guest; "I don't think I ever saw a sheep called by that name in any of my reading."

"Nor I," said the father. "He must have caught it of the boys."

"I wonder you do not send that nice little quiet fellow to school."

"I promised the late lamented Mrs. Droneham not to send him from home," replied David, looking very widowery.

"Then, I would have a tutor for him. He is getting quite old enough for Latin and Greek," said the guest. "The boy shoots well."

"What!" screamed David;" "he never *saw* a gun to my knowledge, except the old musket used by the bird-keepers against the rooks."

"All I can say is, that I saw him cut down a partridge in your nine-acre piece as cleverly as I could do it myself. It was not the first he had killed either, by the skilful way in which he twisted the bird's neck, turned it under his wing, and pocketed it."

"Impossible! you must have been mistaken."

"Oh dear, no! I saw him as plainly as I see you, and admired him for his skill. What does he do with his pocket-money?"

"I do not know—I never thought to ask *him*," said David, quite disconcerted.

"Hum!" said the guest, but dropped the subject, as it seemed an unpleasant one.

David Droneham questioned Babbington before he went to bed that night; but the boy denied the charge so quietly, and gave such a truth-seeming account of the way in which he disposed of his allowance, that it almost satisfied his father that his guest must have been mistaken. He could not, however, help thinking about the boy before he went to sleep more, perhaps, than he had ever done before. The result of his meditations was, that as soon as he had finished his morning meal he mounted his horse, and rode over to the rectory of an adjoining parish.

The house was occupied by the curate, a quiet, pious, single-hearted man, who—to relieve the disorder common to curates, and aggravated in his case by a sick wife and a large little family—poverty—took pupils, and devoted all the hours he could spare from

his parish to their mental and moral improvement.

Mr. David Droneham wished, by an offer of a liberal salary, to induce this gentleman to attend his son at home for a certain number of hours daily; but his other engagements would not permit of such an arrangement. It was finally settled that Babbington should attend at the rectory, and take lessons with the other pupils.

The boy was not sorry to hear of the plan adopted by his father; for he longed to associate with boys of his own rank in life, and wished to learn something of the world in which he was to live, when he came into his property, of which Giles had given him a very much magnified account. Had he had any unpleasant feelings about the matter, they would have yielded to his delight at the thought of having a pony kept for him to ride to and fro daily, and on which he had fully made up his mind to take a gallop with a pack of harriers, that were kept a few miles off. Giles had often suggested to him that he never would be a perfect sportsman

until he could ride up to hounds; but neither tutor nor pupil could suggest a plan by which a nag could be obtained for the purpose. The difficulty was now removed, and the boy was resolved to profit by it.

At the end of a month's attendance at the rectory, the following conversation took place between Master Babbington, not yet thirteen years of age, be it remembered, and Giles Darman, which I record, as it will show how well he had profited by Giles's tuition, and give a bird's-eye view of his daily proceedings.

"How do you get on? Dost like Greek and Latin?"

"Toll-loll—it's up-hill work; but I'll accomplish it. I am not to be beaten by a set of muffs, who don't know a stoat from a weazel."

"How do you like your master?"

"Oh! well enough. He's very clever, I think, and very kind; but *so* easily gammoned! I can make him believe anything. He, like the old one, and the rest of the fools about him, believes me to be the quietest little

boy in the county. I have only to say, 'Papa's compliments, and begs you'll excuse me to-morrow,' and he believes it as readily as if it were the truth."

"What a spoony!" said Giles.

"I had a capital go yesterday: a run of an hour and a half, and only got spilt once."

"Did you kill?"

"Oh! yes:" and Babbington gave a splendid account of the run, and told it in sporting phrases that would not have disgraced an old thistle-whipper.

"What sort of boys are they up at Rectory?"

"Muffs, I tell you, mere bookworms. I've sounded them all, and they know no more of horses, dogs, or anything else worth knowing, than if they had never left their mothers' apron-strings. But I have not let them into any of my secrets, nor do I intend to do so. Close and quiet, that's my plan. Fill me a pipe, and give me some grog."

Giles Darman slapped his pupil on the back, and obeyed.

For three years the young lad carried on

his plan of deception unsuspected; for his tutor heard nothing in the shape of gossip at the rectory or in his parish; and David Droneham, who was beginning to feel the effects of old age, toddled about his farm as much as he could, and when he went in to dinner, he ate it, and fell asleep over a book or a paper. He seldom saw any visitors, and those he did see generally came upon business, and took their departure as soon as it was concluded. He was, therefore, quite satisfied that his son was going on quietly, and just as he wished him to go on.

To do the boy justice, he really worked hard at his books, and made a greater progress in his classics than his fellow-pupils, for he did not choose to be beaten in anything he undertook. Moreover, it was a part of his plan to work when he sat down to work, in order that he might have more leisure to sport.

Just at the commencement of his seventeenth year, at the end of which he was to go to college, contrary to the advice of his tutor, who wisely urged his father not to let him go

into residence until he was nineteen, his views of life were changed. A young man, his senior by one year, who had retired from a public school to save a sentence of expulsion for some grave offence against the discipline of the establishment, came down for a year's tuition under the curate of——.

Cecil Darell was a scion of a good family, tall, handsome, and of winning manners, not vicious, but as mischievous as a monkey, and as daring as an Old Westminster. He was just the reverse of Babbington Droneham, for he never acted the hypocrite; but what mischief he did he did openly, and never denied it when taxed with it. He scorned a lie, and would rather have taken the blame of another's fault than screened himself by betraying a friend.

Babbington was greatly pleased with Cecil, and listened to his stories, of the scrapes he had got into and out of, the feats he had performed, and the tricks he had played, with that wrapped attention which never fails to please a youthful narrator. But Droneham, with his usual caution—cunning would be a

better word—did not repose any confidence in or betray himself to Darell, until he had involved him in a scrape which ensured his secrecy on any subject he might choose to entrust to him. When they mutually understood one another, Cecil was disgusted at the low habits and associates of his companion, and told him so. Giles Darman was soon after this surprised to find his company shunned by the boy whom he had instructed, and meditated a betrayal of all that had occurred between them to the father. He thought better of it, however, for the disclosure might have been attended by serious consequences to himself; and his place was too good a one to be risked merely for the sake of taking vengeance on a boy, who would not smoke or drink with him, or kill game for his profit.

The boys hunted, fished, and ferreted on the sly, and even stole into Kinch's hotel now and then, and had a bottle of wine; but beyond that, and stealing away to a coursing match, or a game of cricket at Woodstock, in Blenheim Park, they engaged in nothing

which might fairly be deemed objectionable. They went up together with the curate of ——, to enter at Christ Church and to be matriculated; and, while the tutor took his quiet mutton-chop at the Mitre, Cecil contrived to introduce Babbington to a few of his old schoolfellows, and to show him what a very lively affair a college luncheon is when kindred spirits meet together, and how superior champagne is, as an exhilarator, to any other vinous or spirituous compound. They were both to go into residence in the same term, and both eagerly longed for the day to arrive that was to see them emancipated from the true *status pupillaris*.

The time at length arrived. Cecil Darell and Babbington Droneham took possession of their rooms in Peckwater Quadrangle. Cards were left, invitations given to breakfast, dinner, and wine-parties, and both were delighted with the liberty they enjoyed. There was this difference, however, in the young men. Cecil was always getting into scrapes for knocking in late, cutting chapel or lecture or being seen in a row; while Babbington

was never known to knock in after hours, miss chapel, or be absent from lecture. It was a part of his old system: the leaven of Giles Darman's spirit still working in him, and, like all hypocrisy, it answered for a time.

"What account do you give of our new members, Mr. ——?" said the dean to one of the college tutors; "Mr. Droneham and Mr. Darell, for instance?"

"Mr. Darell is the better scholar of the two, and might ensure a high degree if he were but steady; but I fear we shall have to punish him severely for his irregularities ere long."

"And Mr. Droneham?"

"Not very brilliant, but very attentive to his duties; indeed, from all I have heard of him, I believe him to be the quietest man in college."

On the following morning, Babbington Droneham was invited to breakfast with the dean, to meet some of the quiet men. He dressed himself so artistically, and behaved with such propriety, that he left the dean

with a full conviction on his erudite mind that his house had met with a treasure in so exemplary a young man. Had he seen him exchange his sober suit of black with a white tie, for a green cutaway coat and spicy neck-cloth, and mount the tandem which waited for him, when lectures were over, at least a mile out of Oxford, he might have formed a more accurate opinion of the young commoner's character; but deans have no chance of seeing such things, or the system would soon be put an end to.

Cecil Darell, I am sorry to say, was rusticated for two terms for giving a noisy party in his rooms, which ended with a little bonfire in the quad; while Babbington Droneham, who had been the first to suggest the *finale*, and the most active in dismembering sofas, chairs, and tables, to carry it out, was not even suspected to have been present at the party or the fire.

When Cecil's banishment was over, he returned to Oxford, and found his friend still in high favour with the authorities, and bearing his old title of the quietest man in col-

lege, although he rode races in Port Meadow, larked over the country, and hunted the Gehazi hounds, drove tandems, gave spreads, and, moreover, took lessons in sparring of professionals from London, and tested his progress in the fistic art by picking quarrels with the rustics who tried to prevent him from galloping over their master's wheat, or making gaps in the mounds. He got better shooting than any man in Oxford; and, although he poached upon all the best manors round, he, somehow or other, never was caught.

Cecil could not think how his friend managed; but, as I said before, Babbington never neglected a college-duty, never exhibited himself in any other costume in the University but such as was worn by the quiet men. If he gave a party, it was never in his own rooms, but at a pastrycooks or an hotel. His scout was not admitted to any one of his secrets; and, if any signs of a disturbance were exhibited likely to require the proctor's interference, he was the first to leave the party and seek his own well-arranged and soberly-furnished rooms.

To a certain set only, and that not a very extensive one, but one on whose members he could depend for secrecy, were his wild and dissolute habits known. He never went out of college, or was seen in the streets without his cap and gown, which were readily exchanged at some man's lodgings at the extremity of the town, and resumed when he returned from his ride or his drive.

Cecil adopted his friend's plan, and found the benefit of it. His character was held in higher estimation by the university authorities, but he despised himself for the hypocrisy which he practised. He was obliged, however, to practise it, or give up all his fun; for he knew that if he were found out in a second breach of discipline, his previous rustication would ensure his expulsion.

Both the young men came up in the Michaelmas Term of their second year, after having spent the long vacation together at David Droneham's, near Wychwood Forest, where they sported—that is, shot, fished, and hunted—undisguisedly, with the consent of their friends and neighbours. They went up

for their first examination, and passed it very creditably on the same day. Of course, it was requisite to give a pass-party. Cecil, in spite of Babbington's advice, gave his party in his own rooms, and invited every man whom he knew. The consequence was that the party went off badly, and ended in a riot, for which he got summoned before a seniority, and severely imposed—being confined to gates and chapel until the task was done. Babbington gave his party at the Mitre, and confined his invitations to his own set. His dinner and wines cost him less than the wines and desert alone cost Cecil; and the party passed off, noisily it is true, but without any unpleasant results beyond headaches and loss of appetites at breakfast on the following morning, which were set right and restored by a gallop to Abingdon, and a luncheon at "The Thistle."

The dean sent for Babbington just before he mounted his hackney, and, seeing his pallid looks, told him he was afraid he had read a little too hard, and begged of him to relax a little, lest his health should suffer

materially; and, after having been complimented on the respectable manner in which he had passed his little-go, and on his general quiet and student-like conduct in college, he rushed out of my gate to the stables, mounted his nag, and made "his set" laugh by describing his scene with the dean.

Babbington now thought that his character was so firmly established, that he might follow the dean's advice, and "relax a little" from his excessively cautious behaviour. He was anxious to try his skill in boxing with a notorious scamp, a bargeman who dwelt in that nest of infamy, St. Thomas's parish, and who had grown quite unbearable in his conduct to the gownsmen, from never having been successfully opposed and punished as he deserved.

There had been two or three skirmishes in the streets, as there generally used to be in the month of November some few years ago, and there was every probability of their leading to a town-and-gown fight. The Big Bargeman was sure to be found leading on a set of low fellows; and Babbington Drone-

ham expressed his intention of seeking him out, and trying his science with him. Cecil, although he was confined to chapel and gates, was fully bent, contrary to his friend's wishes and advice, on going out to see the result of the trial. An opportunity was soon afforded him.

He had a few friends dining with him one evening about seven o'clock, among whom were Babbington, and some others of their own set. The second bottle of claret was just un*forked*—for the corkscrew, like all college corkscrews, was missing—when a rush, as of many feet, a rumbling sort of noise, like distant thunder, or the rolling of the waves on a pebbly beach, was heard mingled with obscure shouts and cries, which grew louder and louder, and at last resolved themselves into distinct sounds of "Gown, gown! Town, town!"

At the well-known, spirit-stirring sounds, every man sprang to his feet.

"They come, they come!" shouted one.

"On with your caps and gowns, lest friends mistake us for foes," cried another.

"Let us go out of college before an order is given by the dean to close Tom and Canterbury Gates," suggested a third.

"Now, Babbington, screw up your courage to the sticking-place," said Cecil; "for be assured the Big Bargeman leads them on."

"I am ready for the fray," said Babbington; "but I must not be known. Lend me your frock-coat and a blue tie. Now, then, that will do. Instead of a commoner's gown, find me a student's; and then for the honour of Oxford and the credit of Tom Spring."

This was said, and the alterations in dress made in half the time it has taken me to describe the scene. One bumper round to the success of "The Gown," and down flew the young men; and, scampering across quad, through Peckwater and out of Canterbury gate, rushed to the left up Oriel Lane. They found themselves in a mob of some two or three hundred people. Some were erect, some sprawling, while others were hitting out at, or stopping, the blows of their adversaries, amidst the shouts of victory or the groans of

defeat. As soon as the accession of friend from Christ Church was seen by the gownsmen, a louder shout of "Gown, gown!" rent the air. The foes retired for awhile, and took up their station between St. Mary's Church and the lodgings of the Principal of Brazenose.

"A charge, a charge!" shouted Babbington. "I see the champion of St. Thomas's."

"A charge, a charge!" cried Cecil, seconding his friend.

"A charge, a charge!—on gown, on!" screamed a hundred voices; and, like a stone hurled from an engine, the university men sprang forward upon the enemy, and, by sheer weight and pluck, dislodged them from their position, and sent them flying in scattered parties into the midst of Radcliffe Square.

The Bargeman fought well, and tried to rally his forces; but what could bone, beer, and tobacco, effect against youth, high-blood, and generous wine? Every time the town—as the [illegible] called themselves, though no *respectable* townsmen ever joined in open and

unseemly enmity against the university-men—rushed to the attack, they mere met with rap, rap! bang, bang! right and left, left and right, and quickly sent back again amidst their discomfited companions.

"Forward, forward! show them no quarter," said Babbington; "round some of you, by Exeter, the Park, and Broad Street, and outflank them."

Away scudded Cecil, understanding his friend's tactics in an instant, round by the way pointed out, summoning the Lincoln, Jesus, Exeter, and Trinity men in his way; and, just as the Bargeman and his crew were flying from the foe in front, and trying to reach Wadham and the Parks, and so escape, he fairly hemmed them in; and then began the fiercest of the fight.

"Gown, gown! Town, town!" Blows fell thick and fast amidst the inspiring cries. The shrieks of the wounded were heard amidst the shouts of the victors; laughter was mingled with groans; and curses both loud and deep issued from the lips of the defeated St. Thomas's men.

"On, on, forward!" shouted Babbington; "victory—they yield, they yield!"

"Press on them, keep them in!" screamed Cecil, as he cut off the retreat of some who would have scampered off down College Lane. "Don't let a man escape." Whack, whack! thump, thump! rap, rap! and Cecil found himself engaged with two or three big fellows, who, if they had had any science, would have overpowered him; but he fought well, struck out straight from his shoulder, while his opposers threw away their roundly-delivered blows on the air. "Hurrah! Give it to them! A charge, a charge!"

The change was effective; and Cecil found not only time to breathe, but his gown, or rather another man's gown that he had borrowed, torn to shreds, and his cap-board smashed to atoms.

"At them again," cried he; "charge!—another charge, an you love me! and we are——"

"Your name and college, sir," said a proctor, laying his hand upon Cecil's shoulder.

"Smith, of New-inn Hall," said Cecil, as

he left his tattered gown in the proctor's hands, ducked into the thickest of the crowd, and whispered audibly, "The proctor, the proctor!—cut and run."

In an instant hostilities were suspended, and what had been a thickly-mingled crowd became mere flying scattered clouds of frightened individuals.

Sauve qui peut—Anglicé, the devil take the hindmost—was the favourite motto with both town and gown, for the proctor was a foe common to both parties. Some were caught, and sent home to their respective colleges, under the care of a bull-dog (as the proctor's man is called), if they were gownsmen; if the captured were townsmen, they were handed off into durance vile for the night, and "had up" in the morning.

But I must return to my hero, Babbington Droneham. He was dreadfully irate at the inopportune approach of the university peace-keeper, for he had just reached his marked foe, the terrific Bargeman; and even amidst the confusion of the mêlée, contrived to let him know that he was anxious to try his

powers in a single combat, in a ring, composed of friends and enemies, who, Englishmen-like, would be sure to see fair play—nay, the ring was actually being formed, when the cry of "proctor" reached them.

"Never mind," said Droneham, "we will manage it yet. Away up High Street, and down the Butcher Row. I will meet you opposite the Castle-gates."

"Done," said the Bargeman; and he willingly retired with his party to the spot indicated, which was close to his own realms, wherein he reigned despotically.

Even in the midst of this scene of excitement, Babbington could not forget the cunning taught him by Giles Darman. He smoothed his ruffled feathers, and watched what was going on in the immediate neighbourhood of the proctor. His quick eye discerned Cecil as he escaped, or rather tried to escape, from the active marshal. His foot was put out just before the marshal's legs, as if by chance; and, as he fell heavily to the ground, Darell dived into a body of men, and was safe.

A second glance showed Babbington a very large operative in the act of punishing a bull-dog, by battering with his huge fist his head, which was held, as by a vice, under his arm.

"Loose your hold, fellow! that is a proctor's man," said Droneham.

"I'll see you at York first," said the operative, weaving away at the poor man's head more vigorously than ever.

"Then take that—and that—and that!" Each *that* closed an eye, or sanguinified a nose; and, just as the proctor came up, the operative was on his back on the pavement, crying for mercy.

"Your name and college, sir? What is the meaning of this?" said the proctor.

"Droneham of Christchurch, sir," replied Babbington, capping the official most respectfully; "I was going quietly home to my college, to tea, when I saw that very rude individual there ill-using your follower, so I rescued him, sir."

"Ay, that he did, sir, and if he hadn't adone it I should never have been fit for nothing no more, for the snob had got my

had in chancery, and was taking his costs out of it before judgment was given," said the bull-dog.

"Mr. Droneham, I am very much obliged to you: your conduct shall be reported to the dean. The university thanks you through me, its officer; but, go home to college now, or you may get hurt."

Babbington capped the proctor more humbly than before, and expressed his delight at having been able to assist so excellent a servant of the university. The proctor returned the capping, and went off to his duties, while Babbington, the moment he was out of his sight, scampered off as fast as he could to meet the Bargeman opposite the Castle-gates. As he turned into the High Street, he saw poor Cecil, capless and gownless, and almost stripped, in the hands of a pro-proctor. Cecil saw him, and begged him to rescue him, or he should be expelled. Droneham gazed on him as if he knew him not; turned up his eyes as if disgusted at his depravity, and walked quietly on until he was out of the pro.'s sight, and then resumed his running.

The Bargeman was true to his appointment. He was standing stripped, ready for the fight, before the spot fixed upon, and surrounded by a ring made up of gown and town, who had laid aside their hostile feelings, and were as quietly betting with one another, on the result of the contest, as if they had not exchanged a blow.

In an instant Babbington's gown and cap, coat, waistcoat, and neckcloth were off, and given to the care of a bystander. No sparring took place, for both combatants were in earnest. The one was bulky and unwieldy, but possessed of immense strength; the other was tall, thin, and wiry, and as active as a kitten, and trained "on scientific principles," as his father would have said.

The battle did not last long, for, to the great surprise of his former admirers, the hero of St. Thomas's could not hit his adversary; whereas, Droneham was planting blows upon his enemy's head, which seemed to fall first on one side, then on another; now in front, then behind; as if the administrator had the power of being ubiquitous.

When, after a blow, planted "on scientific principles," just under the left ear, the Bargeman fell to the ground, and confessed that he had had enough, a shout rent the air, and the victor received the sincere congratulations of all the spectators.

"Hurrah, hurrah! the bully is beaten!" said Babbington, as he looked round for the man who held his clothes for him.

"Mr. Droneham, of Christchurch!" said the proctor, "is it possible?"

Babbington tried to get up a lie, but he could not; he was confused. He tried to speak the truth, but he could not, for he had not been used to do so. He stood confounded.

"You will call on me, sir, to-morrow morning at ten. James, see this gentleman safely to his rooms."

James assisted him in putting on his clothes, and left him not until he had seen him safely deposited within my gate, and then ascertained from the porter whether the name he had given to the proctor was the right name or not.

"Certainly," said Cerberus, "that is Mr. Babbington Droneham, the quietest man in college."

"The deuce he is!" said James. "I never should have thought it. He fights like a *fancy-man*."

"And what was the result?" said I to Great Tom.

"Cecil Darell was expelled. Many other men were rusticated, but Babbington Droneham's story was believed—'that he had mistaken his way to college, and turned round the Butcher Row in his haste to gain his rooms, because he was the quietest man in college, and only fought in his own defence.'"

"And so humbug was rewarded," said I.

"No, it was not," replied Great Tom; "for, after awhile, the truth came out—*magna est*, you know the rest. All Giles Darman's lessons in cunning were thrown away, and his pupil expelled the university, for he —(but that's a secret)—and laid the blame upon one of his most intimate friends."

"What became of Giles Darman?" I inquired.

"He was prosecuted by 'the quietest man in college' for snaring hares on his estate after he came into possession of it, upon the death of poor David Droneham, and gave up the ghost in prison and in disgust at his pupil's ingratitude."

"And Cecil Darell?"

"Went into the army, fought like a man as he was, and cut 'the quietest man in college' for the remainder of his days."

CHAPTER V.

THE ELECTION.

Nul ne sait si bien où le soûlier blesse, que celui que le porte.—*Old Proverb.*

"Yaw-aw-awh!" uttered I, at the completion of the tale that Tom toll'd last.

"What do you mean by that? Do you wish to insult me? I'll call you out," said Tom.

"I wish you would," said I, internally, "for I see no other chance of getting out."

"I can stand fire, I can tell you: witness my excessive coolness when our house was in a blaze, and my old friend on the right—the Hall and its neighbours—were burnt down. I was rather alarmed, I confess to you, when they turned me into an alarm-bell; but though my clapper went faster than ever it

did before or since, and I made a deuce of a clamour, I can assure you I am no coward. What is your objection to my last tale?"

"Too much fighting in it," said I: "whack, whack — rap, rap; you understand me, of course."

"Of course I do; but I strike so often myself, that I rather admire the propensity when displayed by others. It is not unnatural surely that I, Great Tom, should have an attachment to *bell-a, horrida bell-a.* Eh? If I ever marry, I shall choose an *Isabella:* that is not unnatural, either. Eh?"

"Not at all," said I; "but pray don't pun, especially in Latin; I am so cold and uncomfortable, that I shall be glad of a translation."

"I twig," replied Tom, "but you have not a chance. It is not often that I get a friend to pass the night with me, and when I do I must make the most of him. You are a capital listener—an invaluable acquisition to a story-teller. Just fancy yourself Lalla Rookh, and me Fadladeen, in the book written by my namesake, Tom ——."

"No *more* of that, pray," said I; "but if you have any thing worth hearing, begin."

"Don't be in a hurry — here comes the hammer — a relation of Hammer Lane, no doubt, for he hits so hard; but it's only a little quarter — blow — there — 'bom!'—it's all over. Make yourself as cozy as you can while I my tale unfold."

On the coast of Suffolk stands a church, so conspicuously placed on a hill that it is a most useful landmark to sailors. By bringing it in a line with the steeple of another church, which is built upon the very verge of the marshes, the navigator is enabled to avoid a most dangerous bank of sand, on which many a vessel with its crew has been wrecked.

The name of the parishes which boasted of these churches was Darrington; but, to distinguish them, the one was called Darrington Major, and the other Darrington Minor, in the records of the diocese. The rurals who dwelt around them designated them, to save time and breath, I presume, as Great Darr and Little Darr. If a stranger inquired

Darrington Major or Minor, he was answered by a stare and an "Anan, sir?" and on repeating his inquiry, was gravely told that there was no such place thereabouts. Neither of these churches could claim what is legitimately called a village. The congregations who attended them came from some scattered farmhouses, and a few labourers' cottages. The only house within a convenient distance of either place of worship was the rectory of Great Darr., and a small cottage, which served as a lodge to the rectory, in which dwelt the man—a common farm-labourer—who officiated as the parish clerk. The nearest house to the rectory and this official's abode was situated at the distance of a mile at least.

Both of these parishes were in the gift of the Crown. The income arising from the larger one was good—say, some five hundred pounds per annum; but the smaller one, in olden times, was barely worth one hundred and fifty pounds, and had no residence attached to it. As a set-off to this, however, the duties were lighter than the income; for,

except in the very driest days of a very dry summer, the church was not approachable, except by a boat. As all the parishioners of Little Darr. lived nearer to Great Darr. church than to their own parish church, it was an understood thing between them and their pastor that the church of Little Darr. should be closed during nine months of the year, and that they should attend the service in the more convenient and approachable church of Great Darr.

From custom, the rector of Great Darr. was always appointed to the curacy of Little Darr., because the incumbent of the latter parish could not by any possibility become a resident. There was no glebe whereon to build, and no residence to be obtained in the parish. Oddly enough, an instance had never been known, even in the traditionary annals of the oldest inhabitant, of the two livings having been held by the same individual; and, still more oddly, the two livings had never, in the memory of man, fallen vacant in the official lifetime of any one Lord Chancellor.

Little Darr. was always looked upon as the

last object of an aspirant's hopes. If it was vacant, every applicant for the Crown's favours, in the way of church preferment, happened to be from home, and did not answer the letter in which he was told that the Lord Chancellor had fortunately an opportunity of obliging Mr. So-and-so, by offering him a small living in the gift of the Crown. It was the most agreeable thing possible for the gentleman who held the seals that Little Darr. should be at his disposal, or rather for his private secretary, for he had fewer letters to write in answer to applications for preferment, when this vacancy occurred, than at any other period.

When Great Darr. "fell in," as it is called, the applications were numerous, and every prudent seal-bearer gave it away immediately to the first man on his list. The house was good, the situation delightful, and the duties very light; it insured also, as I have said before, the curacy—nearly a sinecure—of the adjoining parish of Little Darr.; it had, moreover, attached to it a snug glebe—some sixty acres of the best land in the parish—which

was rented, above its value, by the principal landowner, because it was the only bit of really good pasture land for miles round.

Darrington Major was therefore looked upon as what is termed one of the Chancellor's best things.

As I have described the parish, it will now be necessary for me to give a brief sketch of the incumbent thereof, and a short account of how he was lucky enough to obtain so desirable a living.

Demetriades Finney was a Cambridge man, and by unparalleled exertions succeeded in getting what Cambridge men call the "wooden spoon." This spoon exists not materially; "shape it hath none;" but it is metaphorically used to illustrate what members of the sister university term "a close shave." The man who so narrowly escapes "a pluck" as to wonder at his luck in getting his *testamur*, and is placed in the lowest depth of the examination-list, is, by a figure of speech peculiar to the Cantabs, said to carry off the wooden spoon. This piece of luck befel Demetriades Finney. He had really worked hard, and

hoped to be placed in a respectable part of the list; and when he saw that he was the "shy man" of the year, he was so disgusted, that he only stopped to take his *Artium Baccalaureus* degree; and, resigning all thoughts of honours in the Church, in which his paternity wished him to "push his way," he resolutely insisted upon being put to the desk in the attorney's office in which his respectable governor was the principal partner.

"Thirteen hundred and forty-four pounds fifteen shillings and ninepence halfpenny have I spent on your university education," said old Finney, "and now you will not enter into the Church."

"I am a spoon—a wooden spoon," said the dejected Demetriades.

"Gracious goodness!" said mamma, "to think of your giving up the Church and turning lawyer,—consider what *caste* you will lose."

"I am a spoon, mother, a wooden spoon," replied the son.

"Demmy, dear Demmy," cried two sisters, "*do* be a parson; it will help us off."

"I am a spoon, girls; a—a wooden spoon."

"Demmy, it's too bad of you, upon whom the old one has consumed such lots of money, to turn round and floor him at last, and me too," said the brother, the younger brother; "for if you go into the office, of course I've no chance. It is not behaving handsome."

"I am a spoon, William; a mere wooden spoon," said Demetriades.

"Spoony, you mean," said the brother, turning away disgusted. "I wish I had had your chance, that's all."

"You'd have been a ladle—a wooden *ladle*," shouted Demetriades; "you have not brains enough to be a wooden *spoon*."

In spite of the entreaties of his father, the supplications of his mother, the endearments of his sisters, and the sulky remonstrances of his brother, Demetriades Finney would not return to Cambridge to take his M.A. degree. He entered the office, and worked hard. Nature, or the accident of having been born an attorney's son, qualified him for the business, into which he entered heart and soul. He was so indefatigable in his attendance, so

sedate in his method of conducting a case, and so beautifully heartless in his views of proceeding against an unfortunate, that even old Finney expressed an opinion that, if Dunmay had entered the Church, the world would have gained a bad parson and lost a good lawyer.

William Finney was so annoyed and irritated by his brother's success, that he eloped with the proceeds of a long and very interesting Chancery suit, and, having turned the cheque into coin, he took a passage in an American liner, and settled in Canada. He might perhaps have prospered there; but whiskey was so cheap, that, to drown his vexation at his brother's success in the office, he imbibed every day, and all day, and was found one evening in an apoplectic fit from which he could not be recovered, although the nearest medical man rode twenty-seven miles and a half to bleed him, as soon as he heard of his attack; of which he did hear by a pedlar's cart which passed through his purchase of land some three days after the fit occurred.

The sisters of Demetriades were happily married; and, as their brother was intrusted with the duty of settling their settlements, they were not sorry that he had not listened to their remonstrances, and gone into the Church. He had done justice to his family, as far as the juvenile female branches of it were concerned. His mother soon forgave him for the disappointment to which he had subjected her—of not being able to talk of "my son in the Church;" for, by his exertions in the law, the family finances were so much improved, and her daughters so very comfortably settled, that she was enabled to set up a carriage and pair, and return the visits of the squiresses (who had been in the habit of not asking her to dinner, under the plea of not wishing to put her to the expense of hiring a chaise,) in a turn-out every whit as well appointed as their own.

Old Finney, too, forgave his son. He was tired of business; and as he had set up in the political line, and taken it into his thick head that he excelled in speech-making, he found the leisure, which his son's attention to pen-

making and bill-making afforded him, very convenient. He devoted the hours that had been occupied in putting the Acts of Parliament into force, to abusing the framers and passers of those acts, unless they happened to be of the same way of thinking as himself. If the new enactments chanced to be the result of some Radical's motion, Old Finney praised them, and told his hearers, over their pipes and ale at the Free and Easy meetings, that "they were the very *niplusultrum* of what Acts of Parliament ought to be, and altogether very different from the namby-pamby aristocratic acts passed by the other side of the house;" for which admirable and acute observations his health was invariably proposed and drunk with three times three, to stop the long speech which was reckoned upon as a rider to the act, and to promote the circulation of the beer which was paid for by the liberal member for the borough in which Old Finney dwelt.

Thus did Demetriades Finney reconcile every twig of his family branch by his desertion of the Church in favour of the law.

But was Demetriades satisfied himself? No. He had been rather a gay man at Cambridge, and had courted the best society; though the best society had not returned the compliment, but had bestowed upon him the cognomen of tuft-hunter; and, though it condescended to eat his dinners, swallow his wines, and use his horses—it did all those things as if it conferred a favour on the giver of the feeds and the keeper of a better stud of horses than is usually to be found in an undergraduate's stables.

Demetriades, too, had rather bragged of his prospects in the Church, and used, over his cups, to hint at the chance of his being able one day or other to have it in his power to bestow preferment on his aristocratic friends. He would throw out certain innuendoes against the bench of bishops for pursuing a mode of conduct towards their clergy which he deemed objectionable; and which he should certainly endeavour to alter, by his example, as soon as he took his station amongst them. All this was listened to with grave faces by his guests; but, of course,

when the feed was over, it caused no little fun among the feeders, and the donor of the feed was soon dubbed "Bishop Finney that is to be." Of the acquisition of this nick-name, Demetriades was not in the least aware, for it was only bestowed upon him behind his back; and many a laugh did he join in which was raised solely at his own expense, and which made his aristocratic friends by so much the merrier, that he, the laughed at, thought his evening party had gone off more delightfully than common when they laughed louder before him than usual.

As this intimation of his hopes—or rather certainty—of gaining the lawn sleeves and uttering the *nolo*, was always accompanied by a delicate allusion to his prospects of being ranked high in the examination lists when those lists came out, and, in clear type, showed him to his little world in Cambridge as the spoon of his year, he did not let his friends see his disgust at so disagreeable a circumstance; but boldly told them that his interest was so good, and his contempt for

university honours so profound, that he had merely gone in to be examined to fulfil a necessary part of his duties to the university, and would not put himself to the trouble and inconvenience of reading for what was not worth gaining after all. As he accompanied this speech—or rather these speeches, for the same tale was told to every man that he knew—by an excellent champagne supper in his lodgings, his story was a little more believed than not: but when the men were getting sober on the following day, the truth of it was not even a matter of argument. "Bishop Finney that is to be" was pronounced a despiser of truth *nem. con.:* but of this he knew nothing whatever. He therefore left Cambridge after giving one of the most correct B. A. spreads that had ever been given, under the false impression that he had imposed upon his friends, and left them to fancy him capable of getting the *senior optime,* if he had chosen to try for it.

In his correspondence with his friends, after he had left the University, he did not think it necessary to inform them of his having re-

signed the desk of a church in favour of the desk in an attorney's office. He merely said that he thought it a bore to be reading after he had taken his degree, and finished by asking after the news of Cambridge, and relating any little incident that had occurred in his own neighbourhood amongst the great people, whom he knew by name, or sight only, but talked of as if they were his most familiar friends. His letters were rarely answered—for he had only been tolerated for the sake of his breakfasts, dinners, and suppers — and the correspondence first languished, and then died a very natural death.

It happened, once or twice, when business called him to London, that he ran against—I merely mean met with—some one or other of his former brother collegians. He immediately dropped the man of business; and, assuming the air of an independent gentleman, presumed to ask, and generally succeeded in persuading, the man whom he had so fortunately encountered, to dine with him at Long's, and gave such liberal orders for the wines, that the client, whose business had

called him to London, found his bill for th particular journey enlarged into a beak.

To any and every question put to hi touching his pursuits in the country, and th cause of his visit to town, Demetriades Fi ney was prepared to put in his answe "The country was dull, he allowed; but th old people liked him to be with them, an they could not last for ever. As to his pu suits, he rode and drove about the countr and wrote a little for his own amusement, b did not publish; and, as to town, he did ru up now and then, but it was more to oblig others than to amuse himself."

As this speech, or others similar to it, wa delivered in a cool, pick-tooth sort of manne and the wine was passed rapidly, the invite guest retired to his party or his bed, co vinced that Bishop Finney was comfortabl off, but horribly bored by being obliged t live with the old people in some out-of-th way place or another. Oddly enough, n one knew where the wooden spoon can from; for, if the question was ever put him, he cleverly shirked it by a sudden ru

signed the desk of a church in favour of the desk in an attorney's office. He merely said that he thought it a bore to be reading after he had taken his degree, and finished by asking after the news of Cambridge, and relating any little incident that had occurred in his own neighbourhood amongst the great people, whom he knew by name, or sight only, but talked of as if they were his most familiar friends. His letters were rarely answered—for he had only been tolerated for the sake of his breakfasts, dinners, and suppers — and the correspondence first languished, and then died a very natural death.

It happened, once or twice, when business called him to London, that he ran against—I merely mean met with—some one or other of his former brother collegians. He immediately dropped the man of business; and, assuming the air of an independent gentleman, presumed to ask, and generally succeeded in persuading, the man whom he had so fortunately encountered, to dine with him at Long's, and gave such liberal orders for the wines, that the client, whose business had

was much increased and very profitable; but still he could not command the sort of society into which he wished to be admitted. He dined with lords and esquires, but he did not experience at their tables the same sort of feeling as he did when he sat down with his University friends, who were of a much higher grade than his present entertainers. He was not looked upon as "one of us," although every attention was paid to him which his talents as a lawyer, and his respectability, both personal and professional, demanded.

Finney liked these parties on one account only; he was not likely to meet at any of them his old college set. There was, therefore, no fear of his situation in life, which he foolishly thought degrading, being made known to those for whom he still entertained the greatest respect, and with whom he would gladly have given all his professional profits to be enabled to associate on the same footing as he had done at Cambridge.

All this may seem strange, and not understandable, to those who have not been at one

of our two Universities, or at Trinity College, Dublin; but, in my long experience from this commanding situation, I never knew an instance of a college man, whom circumstances forced to enter into a path of life different to that which he had meant to pursue, and which separated him from those with whom he had been educated, that did not deem the loss of their society the severest drawback on his success, in whatever pursuit he was compelled to engage in. There is a sort of freemasonry in the signs, words, and grips of all who have been educated at public schools and in the Universities, into the secrets of which those who have not been initiated into the mysteries of public-schoolism and college-life can never penetrate. If I, Great Tom, were in the deserts of Arabia, or in the back settlements of America, or in any other equally undesirable locality, I know that if I met with a Christchurch man, he would be delighted to see me—even if he had passed his undergraduate days in Tom's staircase.

"Hilloah! old fellow," said I, "this is a

digression." He replied, I am aware of it; but lie still, and I will proceed. I am apt to be warm on University matters, and cannot help giving vent to my feelings when they are excited.

Well, it so happened that old Finney, before his death, by his assiduous attendances at Free and Easy meetings, and by his liberal distribution of malt liquor and spirituous compounds, had impressed the little voters—I do not mean the little men, bodily speaking, but those who had "a most sweet voice" from having a very little bit of property in the borough—with a notion that the admission of what he called an unliberal member into—— would insure their and its ruin. Under this impression he left them when he died; which he did of apoplexy, solely resulting from persevering in drinking the strong beer of a brewer whose vote he wished to secure.

It also happened that at this period a dissolution of parliament was expected. The gentleman who had represented —— on the radical interest had sent a letter to old Finney, conveying his wish to retire from public

life, and introduce his eldest son, whom he pronounced a fitting person, from similarity of sentiments and liberality of ideas, to succeed himself. Old Finney read the letter to the members of the Free and Easy, went home, and was found a corpse on the following morning.

My "hero," Demetriades Finney, had hitherto never been engaged in politics in any way. He had not prohibited his father from doing his best to forward the views of his party, because he thought that it amused the old gentleman and did no harm to the firm, though it caused him to be looked shily upon by the opposite party around ——. This shiness was not extended to the son; because, as I have said, he had not taken any decided part in the electioneering proceedings of the borough. His mind and body were both too much engaged in the attempt to fulfil his wish of realizing enough to justify him in retiring from business, to allow him to waste a thought or a moment upon anything that did not tend to the immediate furtherance of that object.

When the vacancy had actually occurred, it struck Demetriades that he might add largely to his store by getting up an opposition to the expectant successor of the former candidate on the radical interest. With his usual business-like caution, before he ventured to hint at such a thing as turning the tables on the party by whom the firm had been hitherto engaged, he carefully examined his deceased parent's papers. He locked himself into his private office, and, after secluding himself for some five hours, was heard by the senior clerk to say, as he emerged from his den—"All right—I have them in my power—there is not one of them that does not stand indebted to the firm."

A consultation with his partner, who had been elected from a senior clerkship to an eighth share in the business, followed; and it was soon settled that the most paying part to take in the approaching struggle would be to throw over the old party and carry the new candidate triumphantly.

But who was to be the new candidate? that was the question. It was a difficult

question too; for the agents *in prospectu* did not mean to support a man who had not the means of supporting them with a liberal supply of cash to defeat the radical and fill their own pockets. Several names were proposed and rejected; and the more they thought of all the likely men, within a circle of fifty miles, the less they seemed to be able to hit on one likely to suit their views, as the "perfection of a candidate" for a seat in the House.

They were puzzled and bewildered; but, luckily, their bewilderment was terminated by the senior clerk, who, after giving a mesmeric rap, popped his head inside the private office-door, and, in a whisper, asked if either of the firm was at home to a gentleman, who evidently was such, though he declined to give his name or state his business.

Finney was not certain whether he was at home or not. His partner rather thought he was not at home. To settle whether either of them was at home, the partner peeped through a little glass window into the outer office

where the gentleman who wished to know if they were at home was standing.

"Yes, I rather think we are at home," said he, after a careful survey; and, when the clerk had retired to convey the pleasing intelligence, he added, in answer to the inquiring looks of the senior partner, "A new candidate, I'll bet a new hat or a silk umbrella—blue coat, *buff* waistcoat, white ducks, and a white tie—a Tory, I'll bet a white felt for summer wear."

The gentleman was introduced. He took off his hat, laid down his riding-stick, and pulled off a pair of yellow Woodstocks, before he took the seat which was placed for him by the junior partner. All the while these operations were going on, Demetriades surveyed the stranger. He was certain that the face and figure had at one time been familiar to him; but both were considerably enlarged. It was, if it was an old friend, like an octavo reprinted and brought out in quarto.

"Gentlemen, I am here to—"

"That voice! Fitznoodleby—I am sure it

is," said Demetriades. "Johnson, oblige me by retiring: this is an old friend of mine."

The partner of one-eighth of course gave way to him who retained the seven-eights.

"Fitznoodleby, don't you remember Finney at King's?"

"What, the Bishop? it cannot be," said the stranger. Finney looked astonished at first, but, after a moment's thought, said—"Oh! I see your error. I was meant for the Church, but the governor wished me to supply his place in the office, and so—I—I—did not think it worth while to disappoint him, and let a lucrative business go to the dogs."

"I am delighted to meet an old college friend," said the Honourable Mr. Fitznoodleby; "especially as I think we are likely to be of mutual service to each other."

"You are a candidate for the borough, then?"

"I am come down on purpose. I am connected with the present administration, and—I may as well speak out—came here to sound the rival candidate's agent before I ventured into the field; but little expected to find in

him a brother collegian, and a man with whom I once lived on such very intimate terms."

Finney recollected that this intimate friend had wined with him twice, and never returned the invitation; but he smiled as he replied, that he was not the agent of the opposing party—that he was quite at liberty to act for any one—and that, of course, he should feel more pleasure in forwarding the views and wishes of an intimate college friend, than those of one for whom he felt no ties of early friendship.

I need not dwell on what passed during a two hours' talk between the college friends, as this is not the election with which my tale is principally concerned. Suffice it to say, that after a week's sojourn in ——, Fitznoodleby was informed in a polite note that his opponent, finding, by some miraculous means for which he could not account, that he had lost a majority of the liberal voters, did not mean to go to the poll.

Soon after Fitznoodleby's election and departure from the borough which he was to represent in parliament, Demetrius Finney was

missing from his desk and offices. The junior partner carried on the business, and to all inquiries for his missing senior, his only reply was, "He'll turn up some day, I'll bet a new hat or a silk umbrella."

"You'll be ill, sir, I know you will, if you read so hard and drink nothing but green tea, and sit up so late o' nights with nothing for a night-cap but a damp towel—and you that took your Bachelor's before you came up," said Tom Cooke, one of our oldest scouts, to a gentleman rather far advanced in life not to be an A.M.

"Never mind, Tom, wet the gunpowder and put in a strong charge; then leave me to read, for I have much to do in a very short time. I am to be ordained on Trinity Sunday."

These words were spoken by our old acquaintance Demetriades, who had been removed by a *liceat* from King's, Cambridge, *ad eundem gradum*, at this house—a difficult thing to effect; but easy in his peculiar case—

dinners and wine-parties to ...
Ch. Ch., to whom the letters given
obliged friend the member for ·
duced him.

Three weeks sufficed to keep wh
his master's term; and, as he had n
his name from the books of his
College, until he removed it to
he was admitted to his master's de
as his residential term was kept.
"go down," however, but remai
lodgings, nearly opposite my gate
the scoutship of Tom Cooke, u
Sunday arrived, when he was o
letters demissory on the curacy of
In a few weeks afterwards he retu
borough of ——, made certain a
with his former partner, and went
curacy. The Vicar of Great I

The patron had taken care that the former incumbent should lose nothing by obliging him, and, through him, the Honourable Mr. Fitznoodleby.

Another fleeting year saw Demetriades Finney a pluralist. For the first time in the memory of the oldest inhabitant, Great Darr. and Little Darr. were in the possession of the same individual, and both given away by one Lord Chancellor.

A few more fleeting years saw Finney a Doctor of Divinity, and saw him riding about his two parishes in a shovel hat, and Archdeaconal-cut coat, elastic knees, and long untopped riding-boots. They also saw him entertaining a large assemblage of aristocratic friends, and among them, when the House was not sitting, the Hon. Mr. Fitznoodleby, who began to think that it "was upon the cards" that the man, at whom he used to laugh at Cambridge for even hinting at the possibility of such an event, might be Bishop Finney, after all.

To effect this object Demetriades left nothing untried. He made himself honorary

secretary to every society that was then i existence, connected, in the remotest wa with the Church; was liberal in his donatio to schools and new churches, and took ca that his name should appear in the pape when he did subscribe, not as "D.D.," " A Friend to the Church," £100—but " Doctor Demetriades Finney, Rector Darrington Major and Vicar of Darringt Minor, £100." He also knew no distinctio of persons or parties in his invitations to t dinners at Great Darr.—the excellency which was proverbial; but carefully select such men for his guests, and such only, were likely to be of benefit to him hereafte

He also made a point of spending thr months in London, in the season, and cult vating those friends to whom he was intr duced by his friend Mr. Fitznoodleby, and t his other friends, whose interest he h insured by his very capital dinners and h obliging manners; for he was always ready preach charity sermons, propose resolutio on the platforms at public meetings, or d anything else to promote the interests of-

himself, and to keep his name before the public. He published a volume of sermons, and, as he paid all the expenses of printing and advertising, and gave them away, they went off with astonishing rapidity. He even advertised a second edition, and then a third, but took care not to have any more than the first impression "pulled off."

It so chanced, about five years after his appointment to the livings of Great and Little Dar., that Demetriades Finney found himself in a very awkward *fix*, as our friends over the Atlantic call it. A question of vital importance, as it affected the Church, had been brought into Parliament, and the part taken by one of the members for the University was so much disapproved of by the majority of the members of Convocation, that they proposed and carried the very unusual motion that he should be called upon to resign his seat. He did so at once; and, after stating his reasons for the part he had taken, appealed to his constituents, announced himself as a candidate to represent the University, and solicited a renewal of their support. A rival

friends, which caused him much
The first which he opened he kne
handwriting was from the Honou
Fitznoodleby. Its contents were th

" Downing Street, Ap

" Dear Finney,

" My friend Sir Ernest
starts again for Oxford University.
you will oblige me by giving him
and all the interest which so pop
as yourself can secure. *We*—you
stand me—shall not be unmindfu
friends who assist us at this *most*
crisis.

" Your faithful friend,

" ARTHUR FITZN

" I *must* vote for Meanwell," sa
as he laid down the note. " are

The other letter ran thus:—

"My dear Doctor Finney,

"I am obliged to you for a copy of your very excellent, I may say superior, sermons. We have read them with great pleasure, and, I hope I may add, advantage. I am happy to see that you have arrived at a third edition—a sure testimony to their merits; by the by, have you heard that Mr. Swillsby Slowe means to oppose Sir Ernest Meanwell at Oxford? Your name is still on the books of Christchurch, I believe; and if you will support Slowe, who is a sound man, you will oblige me. There are strange rumours afloat, and it is believed that *we*—you will see my meaning—are not unlikely to replace the present *administration*. I need scarcely say that we shall not be *slow* in seconding those who support our friend Slowe. —Excuse the bad pun, and believe me,

"My dear Doctor Finney,

"Your sincere friend and admirer,

"PURPLETON.

"PS. If you can spare me one copy more of your excellent sermons, do oblige me by

Purpleton, I think—but it is ... to vote against Fitznoodleby. I that Slowe has strong claims— claims. I will go up to Oxford, and see how my college stands inquire into the truth of Lord postscript."

As soon as Doctor Demetriade finished reading those letters an breakfast, he ordered post-horses for Oxford.

His first care was to call upon Subdean, and Tutors. The approa was the only thing talked of, a exchange of compliments, and o the state of the barometer and t

Dr. Finney was cautious, and tal listener, as he offered no merely asked questions and nod

Ch. Ch.—an unusual circumstance, as my men generally, as a coachman would say, work well together. Upon this momentous occasion, however, they each pulled different ways; some bolted, and others seemed inclined to kick over the traces. The Dean double-thonged them; the Censor tried to curb them up tighter; but they would not answer to the whip, and reared and plunged frightfully.

Dr. Finney was as much in the dark as to the course which it was most for his interest to pursue, after listening to the sentiments of the Dean, as he was before his arrival in Oxford. The Dean and two of the Tutors were evidently in favour of Sir Ernest Meanwell; he had been a good representative; and, although they allowed that he had made a great mistake in yielding to the popular cry on a subject of such vital importance, they quoted the *humanum est errare* in his favour, and resolved to support him, because he belonged to the administration that was *in*. On the other hand, the Junior Tutors were all for Mr. Slowe; for he was wealthy, carried weight

his hobby-horse subjects, the Church,
cation on church principles, and w
over, sure of holding office in the ac
tion. He was *out*, but almost sure
coming *in*. As to Lord Purplet
script—each party claimed the —
stanch supporter; so that the poo
not knowing how to act, resolved t
opinion of Tom Cooke, his scout, wh
fully aware, was well informed on
versity matters.

Tom, as he put out the dress-sui
fore dinner, in reply to Finney's i
which side the majority was likel
shook his head, and confessed that
be sorry to back either party, eve
the general opinion was the odds
favour of the new horse. When
given this, which was the only opini

blow that day week, for the doctor merely coughed, nodded, or shook his head.

"Meanwell is, I believe, sir, a great friend of your friend Fitznoodleby?" said Tom.

The doctor nodded.

'And Slowe is a great friend of your friend Lord Purpleton?"

Another nod.

"Ah! I see how it is—don't promise either party, eh? perhaps not vote at all? If so—take my advice, and leave the ''varsity' as soon as possible, or your morality will be sedooced."

The doctor was half inclined to take this advice, and not risk the seduction of his morality; but he knew that if he did not vote, he should offend both parties, and—he was invited to dine with the Dean.

The dinner was remarkably good for an Oxford Don's dinner, and those only were asked to partake of it who were stanch Meanwellites. Dr. Finney, by implication—for he had given no sign—was supposed to be so favourably disposed to their views, that, after his coffee, as he took his leave, the Dean said,

his head and [illegible]
Dean of course *looked* him.

On the following day, the do
calling upon every man whom he k
University, to find out the true st
opposing parties, dined with one of
Tutors, who was the leader of the
So much did he seem to favour t
the new candidate—by implicatio
was as guarded as ever — that he
for a sure vote for Slowe, becau
nodded his head when some o
thought him safe to carry the elec

The day of the election arrived,
some of the strangest-dressed indi
remote regions that had ever b
Oxford. It was great sport fo
men to see the extraordinarily
oddly shaped hats, and old-fash
[illegible] at the vari

accordingly as the remarkers were Etonians, Westminsters, or Carthusians.

It was a curious but a painful sight to witness men, bowed down by the weight of years and the infirmities of age, meet in the streets or in the convocation house, and, after gazing at each other intently with their eyes shaded by their hands, exclaim—"Why, it must be —Brown, don't you recollect Thompson?" or, "Thompson, you cannot have forgotten Brown?" and then to see them grasp each other's hands, and hold them as if they would never part again if they could help it; and then, after a lengthened inquiry as to their state in life, their fortunes and their families, each would reluctantly drop his old friend's hand, and, turning to a bystander, observe, "Poor Brown! how very old he looks! cannot last long;" or, "Poor old Thompson! to think what a fine young man I remember him; and to think that, with his talents, he is merely a curate now!"

It was a curious but a painful sight, and many a tear was shed in the convocation house that day which fell unobserved down the

withered cheeks, or was silently wiped away by the hands of those who had met then after a separation of many years, and who were never likely to meet again. Some had prospered and were wealthy; others had drunk deep of the cup of affliction, and were poor in worldly goods, but still rich in the warm affections of the heart. The joy of meeting levelled all distinctions; and the man who had travelled to Oxford in his own snug carriage warmly greeted his poorer brother, who had been indebted to some charitable parishioner for the means of reaching the University, on the outside of a public conveyance.

It was truly a curious and most painful sight. Dr. Finney's entrance caused no little stir; his bulky person and flowing robes over his very archdeaconal-cut clothes, gave rise to the question, "Who is he?" The answer, "The celebrated Dr. Demetriades Finney, of Darrington Major and Minor," would at any other time have given him great pleasure. At that moment, however, he was too much engaged with his painful position to dwell upon the celebrity which his name had obtained.

He had not made up his mind *yet* for whom he should vote: but, as he approached the table in his turn, and got a sight of the mode in which each person voted—by writing his name on a long sheet of paper, which was covered with another sheet, so that he could not see how his immediate predecessor voted —it gave him courage; and as he heard a whisper just before he was admitted within the bar that Mr. Swillsby Slowe was eighteen a-head of Sir Ernest Meanwell, he took up the pen and boldly voted for Lord Purpleton's friend, fully confident that his treachery to his friend Fitznoodleby would never be discovered.

He dined with the Dean that day; and, just as they had sat down to table, word was brought in that the votes had been cast up, and the Vice-Chancellor had announced Mr. Swillsby Slowe the successful candidate by a majority of sixty-one.

The faces of the Meanwellites were immediately elongated. They were afraid that they should be beaten, but never dreamed of being so shamefully beaten.

"It is very odd," said the Dean, pausing after he had helped the salmon, and pulling out a red pocket-book. "I thought I had calculated too nicely to be so much deceived here is my list—let me see—you voted,—and you,—and you,—and you, Dr. Finney, you voted for our friend Meanwell, of course?"

All the others said *yes* plainly. The Doctor seized on a port-wine decanter, poured out a large glass, and held it up between the light and his face, that the blush which overspread his cheeks, as he nodded affirmatively, might be mistaken for the purple glow of the wine.

"Some one has deceived me, certainly—I am sure I reckoned very accurately, and know how all our men polled but one. I shall find him out and expose him. Dr. Finney, a glass of wine," said the Dean.

The looks of every one in the party were turned upon the Doctor. He felt very red in the face, and very hot and uncomfortable. A smile, a very meaning smile, went round; and, instead of accepting the Dean's challenge, the Doctor pretended that he had a fish-bone

stuck across his epiglottis, and, putting his handkerchief to his mouth, coughed violently, and left the room.

He even went through the farce of sending for a surgeon to examine his throat; and, whilst the surgeon was endeavouring to find what was not there, a note was brought in by Tom Cooke from the Dean, which briefly stated that "it was now known who it was that had pretended to favour Sir Ernest Meanwell's cause, and had voted for his opponent, and that the sooner the person who had been guilty of such an act explained his conduct or retired into the country, the more agreeable it would be to every one of his brother collegians."

Dr. Finney took the hint and a postchaise and pair. He returned to Great Darr., and waited with no little anxiety the result of his discovered duplicity. Two letters arrived: one from the Honourable Arthur Fitznoodleby, simply telling him that he had acted in such a manner that all further acquaintance must be at an end between them; the other from Lord Purpleton, thanking him for

party.

Doctor Finney explained; but
notice was taken of him. He w
all his aristocratic friends; and, a
went up to London in the season, a
was not called upon to spout on
or to preach charity sermons.

This treatment had such an effe
temper that when he returned to (
he offended the singers, quarrelle
ringers, and had an action brou
him by the parish clerk. His farm
to take his tithes; and, when he
to take them up himself, they sent
of actions for trespass if he went
lands. He did so; and, as his for
sion led him to delight in actions
had so much amusement in that w
use a common phrase, he made t

adopted the advice, and was rung out of his parish by the men, and hooted and screeched out by the boys and women—merely because he had been to vote at an Oxford election.

CHAPTER VI.

THE NICE YOUNG MAN.

Landlord, fill the flowing bowl till it runs over.
Musæ Postpuerenses.

"You are certainly an excellent listener, Mr. Cuique," said Great Tom, wagging his clapper approvingly.

"I am when I am obliged," I commenced.

"Obliged? of course, you are *obliged* to me for telling you such a series of entertaining anecdotes. Should you like another? a *Pursey* anecdote, for instance?"

"Very much indeed, Mr. Thomas," I replied; for what other answer could I make to my belligerent incubus?

"Now don't insult me," said Tom. "Just fancy how Newton, Pope, Homer, or Alcibiades, would have felt to hear themselves

called Mister Alcibiades, Mister Homer, and so on. Don't mister me—you cannot master me, as you know—but call me plain, unadulterated Tom, or Great Tom, if you please. If you are only anxious to be scrupulously correct, you ought to designate me, considering my Italian origin, as Signor Thomaso—but don't do any thing of the kind. I do not like to have my feelings wrung by being reminded of the days of my sweet childhood—

In infancy my hopes and fears,

and all that sort of thing. Don't. Promise me, on the honour of a gent.—I mean a servitor-gentleman—that you won't."

I laid my dexter hand upon the sinister side of my waistcoat, and gave the required promise.

"Talking of designations or titles, or, in plain English, names—yours is a puzzle. Cuique! well, it is a queer name—who gave you that name?"

I was about to answer from the Catechism a question so catechismally put, and say,

"It is an old family name," sa
was most probably of Roman or
father ——"

"That will do," said Tom;
pedigree. Do you know that, o
night of your arrival in my tower,
who had just read your name on y
when he came up to take a toll
was spelling it, and trying to m
thing of it. First, 'it must be *Qu*
'he thought *Kike* or *Kick*,' a
'*Qu-ick*.' I spelt it for him thu
and now he has got it correctly,
rather have astonished you."

"It did a little," said I; "bu
to be called by names that never
me. After all, to use an old q
tation, 'What's in a name?'"

"A great deal sometimes;

thousand pounds merely because his name was Clarke—Clark with an e at the end of it."

"I have got an e to the end of my name," said I, sighing; "but no one of the family has ever made a note of it."

"A pound note, eh? — Never mind the pun—it's a shocking bad one—but just drop all thoughts of being a fortunate youth yourself for the present, and listen to my little tale of one that was—to a certain extent."

"If you please, sir, here is a gentleman," said a quiet, soft-speaking servant to one of our Deans, as he sat writing in his study, "who wishes to speak to you."

"I am not at home, James, to anybody. It is past four o'clock."

"But he says, sir ——"

"I'm gone into the library."

"That he will not detain you ——"

"I'm in the chapter-house or the cathedral."

"More than five ——"

"I'm out for an airing."

"Minutes; his time is very valuable

"And so is mine, James; it is past c calling-hours, and so I'm gone for a wa the meadow," said the Dean, in a d tone.

"If you please, sir," said James, b respectfully, for the college-butler was *tremis*, and he hoped to succeed to h through the interest of his master—" please, sir, the gentleman is a gentlema had given James a half-crown to indu to urge the Dean to see him), "and ha up a long way to enter a young ma gentleman-commoner."

"He cannot be a gentleman, in th sense of that ill-used word, or he woul sent in his card, even if he had calle unbusiness-like an hour."

"If you please, sir, he has sent in hi Here it is," said James, showing four by two of very plain pasteboard.

"Then why did you not give it 1 fore?" said the Dean, very harshly, snatched it out of his servant's hand.

James did not reply, but made a most profoundly-respectful bow.

"Why, what is this?" said the Dean, starting as he looked at the card, and read aloud—

MESSRS. PYPE, HOOKER, AND CO.
Dealers in Foreign Cigars and Tobaccos,
MINORIES.
N.B.—Left-off wearing apparel, books, pictures, and plate, taken in exchange on liberal terms.

"I really beg pardon, sir," said James, turning as pale as if he had been smoking a minerigo, made up from cabbage-leaves and rhubarb stems by Messrs. Pype, Hooker, and Co. "Beg pardon, sir, but that belongs to the other gentleman, as called just at the same time."

"A dealer in filthy tobacco call on the Dean of Christ's Church!—order the porter to turn him out, on pain of being turned out himself if he does not."

"If you please, sir, he called upon *me*," said James; but, finding from his master's black looks that he had made a mistake, he

"Oh! very well, James, sai
brightening up; "here, take bac
and give me the other."

James did so; and, when his
read the name, and bidden hi
Mr. Gabberton Swift, he did so,
tired to his pantry, to conclude
the gentleman who represented
and Hooker. The result of the
that James locked up a two-p
unmistakeable British Cabanas, a
merchant carried off two suits
out black clothes, a pair of bisho
a shovel hat. How exasperate
dignitary have been, to whom t
had lately belonged, had he kn
the dignity which he had deri
dress had ended in smoke!

He knew nothing of it, hov

and not particularly well calculated, from the style of his dress and personal appearance, to command respect.

Mr. Gabberton Swift was, as I have said, a very small man, but a very great talker. His tongue was so well trained, that if he could have entered it for the Derby, he would have won the cup and distanced the whole field—it ran so very fast when it was once started.

"I am happy to see you, sir," commenced the Dean, waving his visitor to a seat, "although you must be aware that ——"

"I catch it! that's enough! unreasonable hour — otherwise engaged. We could not help it—time very precious with men in business," replied the little man, laying down his hat and stick, pulling off his gloves, and diving into an inner pocket after something or another. At last he caught a pocket-book, after fishing for it for some time among a heap of papers, and, opening it, took out a note and handed it to the Dean.

"I presume this is from ——?"

"I catch it! that's enough!—it *is* from

"That's enough! look at the
You'll catch it, and I'll explain to
Mr. Robert Smudgerton, aged
crammed to suffocation in the cl
wishes to be entered immediately,
as soon as possible."

"Are you aware, sir, that o
so—"

"That's quite enough—I catch
you are full, but I think you can

"Room, perhaps, but not roo

"Not so bad that," said Mr. S
and giving a sort of Italian ope
his hands. "Not so decidedly b
money, Mr. Dean, will find th
furnish them too: so have the
get the book and pop him do
know the amount of the fees, a
—a cheque for the money."

of course. We shall cash up liberally to the tutors, though we don't care about the classics. Merely wish him to reside a couple of years or so, just to give him a dash of respectability. Selected your college because it is the most genteel — lots of *nobs* here, a'n't there?"

"Nobs? Oh! the abbreviation of *nobiles*, he means," said the Dean, not exactly knowing how to treat his extraordinary visitor.

"What's the stumpy for a Gent. Com.?" inquired Mr. Gabberton Swift, pulling out a cheque-book from a side-pocket, and seizing the Dean's own swan's quill pen.

"May I venture to inquire, before we proceed any farther in this business, whom—"

"That's enough! I catch it. My name you know. I'm a lawyer—some would not own it, but say solicitor—it is more genteel, *they* think—*I* don't. I'm a lawyer, and live at Brummagem."

"Where?" looked the Dean.

Mr. Swift was looking at him at that moment, and holding his pen, ready to fill up the cheque.

those sorts of things. We can
as good cannons there as you can
said Mr. Swift.

The Dean fell into a seat, dee
at being expected to laugh at
made up afresh by a Birmingha
"Allow me to read this note," s
despairing kind of whisper.

"Read fast then, for I want
the 'Tivy," said Swift, alluding t
be off by the Tantivy coach.

While the Dean was reading
from a former member of his
added to a curate's stipend a fe
taking half a dozen private pupi
employed himself in preparin
leaving a blank for the amount.
Dean had finished reading the
planning some defensible excus

months to prepare him for college, in order that he might acquire the habits and manners of a gentleman," he let the note fall from his hands on hearing Mr. Swift whisper audibly—

"D——d bad pen! but what can be expected from a parson? Wish he'd stir his stumps."

'Mr. Swift, I am really—but I will pass that over—I cannot admit the young gentleman into our house," said the Dean.

"Why not? any thing amiss in his character? Johnstone has not presumed to say any thing wrong of him?"

"I beg to decline answering any questions," replied the Dean, in a decided and dignified tone.

"I catch it—that's enough. See you're up to trap. You'd make a capital witness if you were properly instructed; but, as to Mr. Robert Smudgerton, if you are not satisfied of his respectability from the tutor's note, I must play my trump-card. There, read *that*."

The Dean would have given a considerable sum of money to have had the impudent

little lawyer kicked out of college, but it was not to be done; so he took the note, and to his great surprise found a coronetted seal upon it, and when he had opened it saw a letter from a *nob*, as Mr. Swift would have called him, urging him earnestly and respectfully to admit a young man, who had been brought up to the law, but who had unexpectedly come into a large fortune, as a member of Ch. Ch.

"That's enough—I catch it—Lord Shorte's letter has done it," said Swift. "Now just name the sum, and I'll fill up the cheque."

The Dean was puzzled. Lord Shorte, though a poor peer with a large family, was a respectable man, and he did not wish to offend him. After a few minutes' anxious thinking (during which Gabberton Swift was walking round the Dean's private library, with his hands beneath his coat-tails, examining the engravings and paintings of what he called "the clerical swells"), he told his visitor that he would communicate with him through Lord Shorte, and do the best he could to forward their mutual wishes.

"That's enough — I catch it — Bobby Smudge is all right! Now, what's to pay?"

The Dean rang the bell forcibly, and, as he did so, assured the little lawyer that those matters would be settled when the young man came up to be matriculated. He felt very much relieved when James appeared to usher his visitor out. He made him a low bow, but stiffened his back suddenly again, when he heard Mr. Gabberton Swift say to his servant that he, the Dean, "was the slowest coach he had ever met with, and awfully bumptious, but that he had queered him."

James grinned, but did not dare to laugh outright, for fear he should lose the butlership.

The candidate for admission into Ch. Ch. College was Mr. Robert Smudgerton, or Bobby Smudge, as he was more usually called by his intimates. He was the only child of a curious old man, of whom nobody but Mr. Gabberton Swift knew any thing: and he knew but little until, by a mere chance, he became his man of business.

He dwelt upon a sort of common, upon a

small farm which had been left him by his orefathers, and which was deemed to be of so little value that, had it been thrown upon the market, no one would have given a bidding for it except to insure himself a vote for the county. The little freehold might have contained some seventy or eighty acres of very bad land indeed, and the house and homestead were very small, and in a very dilapidated condition. About twenty acres were ploughed, and produced but scanty crops of corn; and the common, as it was called, though it was not a common, but his own private property, enabled the owner to keep a flock of sheep. By dealing in these, and chopping and changing ewes for tegs, and tegs for ewes, he contrived to get enough to make both ends of the year meet, and to lay by a few pounds, or rather guineas, for he had an idea that a bank-note might possibly become what Cobbett called it—"a mere rag;" while gold, he knew, would always find a market at its own intrinsic value.

Old Smudgerton's wife was a thrifty woman, and made a pretty penny by her poultry.

She was clever in rearing turkeys, geese, and ducks. In fattening chickens and turkey-poults, she was unrivalled. A green goose of her rearing was looked upon as a delicacy; and the higgler who could bid high enough to secure every one of those which she meant to part with, deemed himself a lucky man.

As they had but one child, and lived upon almost nothing, had no rent to pay, and very few taxes, they soon scraped enough money together, to purchase, at a mere trifle, the remainder of what was called the common. Lord Shorte, their nearest neighbour, thought himself a fortunate peer to meet with a purchaser of what to him was really valueless, and his bailiff thought old Smudgerton a greater fool than he took him to be for laying out his gold on so worthless a soil. "The old fool!" said he to himself, as he pocketed the guineas, "to go and give a hundred and fifty good gold coins for a few acres of barren hill, without grass enough upon it to save a sheep from starving."

It chanced one day that the flock which

had been pastured upon this bit of gro
were driven home by their owner just
a clever medical man, who dwelt in
neighbourhood, was riding by. "Hoigh!
Doctor," called out old Smudgerton, "
do tell I you knows a mint of things; ca
tell I what 'tis as sticks to sheep's legs h
about, and makes 'em all yellow-like?"

The Doctor dismounted from his horse,
carefully examined the animals' legs,
then begged to be shown the spot where t
had been feeding. It was pointed out
him; and when he had examined very c
fully the soil of a narrow ditch, down wh
a small stream trickled, he asked to wh
the land belonged.

"To I, to be sure," said the farmer.
paid for un in golden guineas."

"Have you got the deeds right and saf

"Trust I for that. Master Gabbe
Swift, of Brummagem, took care of t
and did not forget to charge for 't."

"Then I can only tell you, if I'm not
ceived, that you have a fortune in this bi
land. There is a vein of yellow ochre l

ich is very valuable. I will take a portion
the soil home and analyze it."
'*Do*," said the farmer; "and if it turns
gold, thee shalt have thy share of it."
he analysis proved the doctor's conjec-
The soil about ten feet below the sur-
of the "barren hill" proved to be a fine
of yellow ochre about nine or ten inches
ickness. By a judicious management of
pit, under the doctor's suggestions, to
n the owner honourably gave a fair per
ge, the profits of it were enormous.
old man did not change his mode of
g in his prosperity, but kept on, quietly
g field to field and house to house, until
came a large landed proprietor.
r. Gabberton Smith thought himself a
y man in having been employed by old
dgerton to make out the title-deeds of
"barren hill," as he did it so effectually
all attempts upon the part of Lord
te to find a defect in them were vain.
ensured him all the business of the lucky
haser, and enabled him to put many a
nd into his pocket, by conveying lands in

the neighbourhood to his fortunate employer. He foresaw that, with Smudgerton's habits and mode of living, the son would one day or another be a very wealthy man. He advised the father, and the advice was given disinterestedly, to send him to a public school, and make a scholar and a gentleman of him.

"'Tain't in un, man, 'tain't in un, I tell ye; but, if you'll take un and make a lawyer on un, I'll ha' un taught to read and write," said the father.

Two years after that promise, our hero, Mr. Robert Smudgerton, might have been seen perched on a high stool in Mr. Gabberton Swift's office, having been taught to write a very fair but cramped hand at a little school in the neighbourhood. As to spelling, that was the rock he split upon. He could copy anything very neatly, but when he had to write a bit of original manuscript, he made a sad mess of it. The ph, in such words as philosopher, was a puzzler; but his great difficulty was in giving the preference to the ie or ei. So, when he came to a word like

believe, he was cunning enough to write two ees, and put a dot just over the middle of them, leaving the reader to imagine that his error was the result of a mere *lapsus plumæ*.

Well, people cannot live for ever. Old Smudgerton died, and his wife too, leaving their son sole heir to a very large sum of ready money, and several very valuable estates, amongst which was the bit of "barren hill," which Lord Shorte's bailiff thought him such an old fool for having purchased of his master in exchange for pure golden guineas.

Lord Shorte, when he heard of the amount to which Master Robert Smudgerton had succeeded, upon the death of his hard-working parents, suddenly felt a great interest in him, and resolved to see him, and, if he found any thing to work upon in him, to make a gentleman of him. He thought that it might not be a very bad speculation to restore the bit of "barren hill" to the family again, by uniting the owner of it to one of his numerous daughters.

His inquiries at Mr. Gabberton Swift's into the sayings and doings of Master Bobby

Smudge may serve to give you an insight into the habits and pursuits of that fortunate young man.

"I have called, Mr. Swift," said his lordship, "to ask a few questions concerning Mr. Robert Smud—"

"That's enough! I catch it—called to pump me about our Bobby," replied Mr. Swift.

Lord Shorte's face lengthened at "our Bobby;" but he merely bowed and inquired if he was steady, attentive to his business, and gentlemanly in his habits and manners.

"That's enough—I catch it. Your lordship means, will he ever be presentable—admissible into good society, and fit to go to church with a real lady."

His lordship winced, but smiled and nodded affirmatively.

"As to steadiness," said Mr. Swift, "he copies out what I set him to do, and then goes to his dogs, ferrets, and other animals, of which he is very fond."

"As a natural historian or a sporting man?"

"I object to that question," said Swift,

"because I cannot answer it satisfactorily. All I can say is he keeps several dogs with very flat noses, short-cropped ears, and tobacco-pipe tails, with which he worries badgers, rats, and cats. He keeps them at a neighbouring public, for my wife cannot bear the noise of the dogs or the smell of the ferrets. That's enough—I think your lordship catches it."

His lordship nodded.

"As to your lordship's next question, touching his habits and manners, I see but very little of him after office-hours, but I am *told* that he sings a capital song, tells a remarkably good story, spends his money like a gentleman, as the sporting men assert, and is particularly good-tempered when he has had his allowance."

"Oh, you allow him a few guineas a week then, for pocket-money?"

"Pooh! pooh! that is *not* enough—your lordship does *not* catch it. I mean his allowance — of grog," said Gabberton, looking rather astonished that a peer should be so ignorant.

"Can I see the young man?" (His lordship was about to say gentleman, but a vision of bull-dogs, ferrets, and glasses of grog came across him.) "I should like to have a little conversation with him."

The little lawyer sprung up and opened a little window, and bade some one tell Mr. Smudgerton that Lord Shorte wished to speak with him.

After an interval of some five minutes, during which Lord Shorte appeared to be absorbed in contemplating the conveniences of Gabberton Swift's offices, and the lawyer to be writing for his life on a sheet of brief-paper lying before him, the young gentleman entered the private room of his legal tutor. He was dressed in a very large pair of Cossack trousers tied in over his ankles, a red-striped waistcoat, and a sea-green cut-away coat—each of these, his upper vestments, being furnished with a double set of pockets. His hair was closely cropped in front, but left long behind, and brushed furiously up over his ears. About his neck he wore a cambric

kerchief, of which the ground was blue and the pattern red.

Lord Shorte shuddered. Gabberton Swift observed the paroxysm, and said, "That's enough! I catch it—he won't do."

His lordship instantly disguised his disgust, and blandly asked Mr. Smudgerton how he did, to which that young gentleman, in a voice very like that of a cuckoo with a cold, or a cabman on night-duty at Christmas, replied, "Tol-lollish, considering."

"Ahem!" coughed his lordship, hardly knowing how to commence a conversation with such a curious specimen of wealthy mortality. "Ahem! I hope you like your profession?"

"Tol-lollish—considering; but profession ain't practice, as Will, the rat-catcher says, and I ain't going to practice my profession."

"That's enough! his lordship catches it," said Swift.

"Does he, by goles? then he's quicker than my dog, the Duffer, and he can catch a rat quicker than here and there one!" said Smud-

gerton, taking up his master's penknife and quietly paring his nails with it.

"May I venture to ask your age, Mr. Smudgerton?" inquired Lord Shorte.

"Nothing venture, nothing have, as Will says. I was one and twenty last grass," replied "our Bobby."

"Bless me! of age? — come into his property?" said Lord Shorte, looking interrogatively at Mr. Swift.

"I wish I was—wouldn't I buy Will's Tippitywichet, the black and tan terrier—that's all! I've got some tol-lollish ones, but she is an *as*tonishing one for vermin," replied Bobby with a knowing nod.

"That is *not* enough—your lordship does *not* catch it. Mr. Smudgerton does not come of age until he has completed his twenty-fifth year," said Mr. Gabberton Swift.

"No thanks to you neither, old gentleman, for tipping the other old gentleman the suggestion," said Mr. Bobby.

"I did it all for the best, young man, and—"

"So did my little bitch, Viper, when she

grabbed one of Will's bantam-chicks instead of an old water-rat," said Bobby, finishing the circle of his very dirty thumb-nail.

Poor Lord Shorte was positively dismayed. Lawyer Swift enjoyed the scene greatly, and would have prolonged the fun had not "our Bobby" taken out his watch and said that "time was up and he was wanted elsewhere. He was particularly engaged to a tol-lollish party at the Bull to see a snake fed upon frogs, and had backed him to eat one, that measured four inches by two, at a gulp."

"That's enough! we catch it—you may go."

Lord Shorte rose, and made Mr. Smudgerton a very polite bow, which that young gentleman returned, by raising his elbow, and then dropping his wrist, as if he was double thonging the near wheeler. As he left the private office, he whispered, but loudly enough for his lordship to hear the observation—

"Call that a peer?—I could manufacture a better out of a Brummagem button-maker."

"Hush! that's enough — his lordship will catch it," replied Mr. Swift, as he thrust the cub out of the door.

"Can any thing be done with him? It is really a pity that so fine a property—"

"And adjoining your lordship's park—"

"Should be thrown away upon such—"

"That's enough! how *can* we make a gentleman of him?"

At the terminus of a railroad debate upon the possibility of converting a low-minded, vulgar wretch into a presentable person, it was resolved *nem. con.*—for there was no one to put in a dictum *contrà*—that "our Bobby" should be released from his articles in Mr. Swift's office, and be properly prepared to subscribe to the Thirty-nine Articles in the study of Mr. Johnstone, the curate of the parish in which the yellow ochre vein lay, and which had proved a mine of wealth to its fortunate owner.

Lord Shorte sighed as he took his seat in the curricle, and thought that fortune had been very spiteful towards him, in not having suggested to *his* sheep to show their yellow legs to an experimental chemist in the shape of a parish apothecary.

I will pass over the period that "our

Bobby" spent at his tutor's, merely observing that he read but very little, and spent the greater part of his time at a neighbouring alehouse, where, without Mr. Johnstone's knowledge, he kept his dogs, ferrets, and other live-stock. He was remarkably surly all the morning, and scarcely spoke to any one; but when he returned from his "quiet walk"—for so he accounted for his visit to the alehouse—he made himself as agreeable as such a brute could do, although Mrs. Johnstone sometimes fancied that he must have spent his time in the greenhouse—his clothes smelt so very strong of tobacco, which, she was aware, her gardener burnt in large quantities to kill the insects.

Let us proceed to describe his college career.

"I have examined that young person, in a very extraordinary dress and with a most inharmonious voice, whom you sent to me, Mr. Dean, with a kind of keeper—a dapper little fellow, who would hardly let me speak a word—and really I cannot conscientiously pronounce him qualified to enter."

"I was afraid so, Mr. Subaudite," said the Dean. "But does he not know sufficient to qualify him for a short residence and an honorary degree? Lord Shorte has taken him by the hand—"

"I am surprised at that," said the college tutor, quietly, "he appears so unfamiliar with soap and water."

"Really, Mr. Subaudite, you are growing too severe," said the Dean, exchanging an incipient smile into a decided frown. "Lord Shorte is very anxious to render this young man, his nearest neighbour, and the possessor of considerable property, a presentable person, and really his legal adviser—"

"What, that's enough! I catch it!"

"His legal adviser, Mr. Something Quick —Speedy—or Fast—I forget his name—"

"Swift," suggested the tutor.

"I thank you, sir; Mr. Swift, as I was about to observe when you interrupted me, has manifested a creditable share of worldly acumen by selecting our house for such a purpose, in preference to any college. Cannot

you, by a little stretch of conscience, pronounce him admissible?"

"You shall judge for yourself, Mr. Dean. I put him on in an easy ode of Horace, and, as he could not translate literally,

——ligna super foco
Largè reponens:

I begged him to render it freely, which he did thus—

Molly, put the kettle on.

The Dean could not resist this; it was too ridiculous; and after a hearty laugh, in which the tutor joined, it was decided that Mr. Robert Smudgerton should be admitted, matriculated, and allowed to come into residence at once if he would promise to engage a private tutor and read hard.

"That's enough! he'll catch it! he's no fool, though he looks a little awkward at first," said Mr. Gabberton Swift, when Mr. Subaudite mentioned the terms on which alone Mr. Smudgerton would be allowed to keep his terms in college.

Bobby nudged his former master, and whis-

pered, "he would not stand having a chap over him all day long, and bothering him about books."

"Pish! *say* you will, and don't do it afterwards — that's enough," replied Swift, in a friendly whisper.

Bobby winked, and then, turning to his new tutor, said "he should be most particular happy."

This difficult point having been settled, the ceremonies were soon performed, and Mr. Smudgerton was a member of our house. Mr. Gabberton Swift, as soon as he had seen him settled in his rooms, placed in his hands a bank-note, value one hundred pounds, and left him, with this little bit of advice, "lark away, as much as you like, but don't be caught out by the dons, or done by the duns."

Mr. Robert Smudgerton took the note to a banker's, and got it changed for gold. He amused himself for some hours in counting over his sovereigns, and then had a game with them at pitch and toss by himself. He got tired of this, however; and when his

scout came to inquire if he wanted any thing, he told him he wanted to buy a dog or two, and asked him if he could recommend him to any person who dealt in them.

"Tom Sharp's your man, sir. He lives in George Lane, and keeps all sorts of animals, from a mouse up to a mastiff, and a very respectable public-house," said the scout.

Bobby was delighted, and gave the servant a shilling to drink his health, which he declined, assuring him that an unlimited order on the buttery for all the college servants was expected of every Freshman. This was soon written out; and, although it was worded, "give the barer and his pals as much bere as they can drink," it was obeyed.

"But whereabouts is George Lane?" inquired Bobby. "And how am I to know Tom Sharp's house?"

"Go out of Tom Gate, sir, turn to your right, and keep straight on along the Corn Market until you come to a church on your right. The first turning on your left after you have passed the church is George Lane.

As to finding the house, you have only to follow your nose, and you can't mistake it, for Tom Sharp keeps such a lot of stinking animals that you can wind them half a mile off."

Bobby's scout sunk several degrees in his new master's estimation; for he thought the *odora canum vis*—if the passage may be construed—"the agreeable smell of a dog-kennel" superior to any of the *esprits* sold and professed to be manufactured by Delcroix, or any other eminent scent-maker.

The directions given to him by his servant were so plain, that Mr. Smudgerton could not mistake them, and the powerful odour proceeding from a mixture of vermin and dogs, with the meats on which they were fed, led him to the door of Mr. Sharp's abode.

"Look out, Tom," said a sort of cad, half inn-porter and other half under-gamekeeper. "Here's a new customer. A raw countryman, if one may judge by his dress."

"I had rather he had been a Lunnuner," said Tom; "for they thinks themselves so

precious clever, and that's what they ain't, at least, in my line. Show the gent. in, William."

Bobby Smudge entered, and was shown into the yard—a narrow, confined spot about sixteen by fourteen feet, occupied in every corner by dogs, badgers, ferrets, pole-cats, rats, mice, poultry, and pigeons. A horrible din arose when they saw a stranger. For some minutes all passed in dumb show, for not a word could be heard until Tom Sharp and Will, his son, had knocked down some half a dozen of the largest dogs with the enormously big sticks which they carried with them for the purpose of keeping order in their canine parliament. I say parliament, because the crowing of cocks and the natural cries of the various animals put you strongly in mind of "another place" where the imitation of those cries is deemed a very clever performance.

As soon as the tumult caused by

> Dog and whelp of high renown,
> And cur of low degree,

had dwindled to a calm, Mr. Sharp began to show his stock individually, and to expatiate

on their respective merits. Mr. Smudgerton examined their points and their teeth, and did other little experiments peculiar to gentlemen n the fancy line so scientifically, that Mr. Sharp looked around at his son Will, and gave him a sign, which meant—"he is not to be imposed upon;" to which Will replied by a counter-sign, implying, "try it on, but mildly."

During the examination, our hero, Mr. Bobby, had not spoken a syllable, or seemed to listen to the owner of the promiscuous lot before him. He had merely taken out a sort of betting-book, and entered certain observations whenever an animal seemed likely to suit him. When they had completed the circuit of the menagerie, he asked, "What Mr. Sharp kept?"

"Dogs, foxes, badgers, and—but I can get you any thing you please, sir," said Mr. Sharp.

"Stuff, man!—I mean, what do you keep in the house?"

Tom Sharp thought it a very odd question, and doubted if his questioner was sane. "Does

he think we keep monkeys, and them sort of Orientals?" said he, aside, to his son.

"What a fool you are, father! the gentleman only wants to know what lickers you keep. Don't you, sir?" said the dutiful son.

Mr. Bobby nodded.

"Please to walk in, sir?" said Mr. Sharp, suddenly changing his tone and manners from a swaggering dog-dealer to a perfectly polite landlord.

"Of course I do please," said Bobby Smudge, in his croaking way, like a raven with a quinsy.

He was shown into a snug parlour, which was decorated with portraits of fancy-dogs and fancy-men, celebrated pedestrians, notorious cricket-players, and fighting cocks in a variety of attitudes. The scene that followed I will not describe—suffice it to say, that a great deal of liquid was consumed; and, although Mr. Sharp was considered the strongest-headed and most lasting drinker in Oxfordshire, and his son was supposed to inherit the paternal virtues, Mr. Robert Smudgerton left them both under the table. He walked,

or rather staggered, into College, at eleven o'clock at night, having won his reckoning, £1 15*s*., and a £5 note at cribbage, and animals of which he had the list in his pocket, and which were to be delivered at nine next morning, to the nominal value of £12 10*s*. at *put*.

Tom Sharp had been completely taken in. He thought he was a match, and more than a match, for any man, much more for a Freshman. And, as to a gentleman-commoner Freshman, he had never met with one before out of whom he had not made a considerable sum of money—but he had never met with one before who had condescended to sit down and smoke with him—not to speak of taking a hand at cribbage and put. . .

"Father, we were done last night, and I have a norrible 'eadach this morning," said Will, addressing his father, who appeared very ill too.

"Was it all fair and aboveboard?" inquired the father. "No—you know what."

"All right, I believe—I really do."

"Where could he have been taught?"

"Teached, you mean," said the son, who had been to a "British school."

"Well—teached, then—if that young man does not take *a fust*, and turn out an honour to his college, I don't know who will. We *are* regular sold, but we must act like men of honour, Will. Here is the list of what we've got to send to Christ Church, and as you say they was fairly won, why we'll pay our debts like gentlemen."

"We must look out for a flat, father, to cover the loss," said Will.

"No occasion for that, Will; they will come to our net without our dragging for them. Recollect that animals are risin forty per cent., and rats are not to be had at no price; but now to act like men of honour."

Mr. Tom Sharp and his son Will, acting on the principle above alluded to, selected a lot of living things, and stowed them away in a most miraculous manner; so much so, that when they entered Canterbury Quad from Oriel Lane, they appeared to be doing nothing but taking a brace of setters into college for a gentleman's approval.

The porter of Canterbury Gate fancied he saw several things moving in the pockets of each of the dog-fanciers, and smelt something so powerful as to induce him to borrow the under-porter's snuff-box, and take a very large pinch of common Scotch out of it.

They were shown to Mr. Smudgerton's rooms, the father and the son. *Filius tali patre dignus!* and left them in a sad state of renewed intoxication about mid-day.

"I think of calling on Mr. Smudgerton this morning, Mr. Dean, and introducing him to his private tutor," said Mr. Subaudite.

"You will oblige me by so doing," replied the Dean, "for I have a letter from Lord Shorte, saying he shall be passing through here to-day, and shall impose upon my hospitality for a dinner. I shall ask Smudgerton to meet him, for I rather like Lord Shorte, and his interest is considerable."

"Ahem! yes — but he has a very large family," suggested Mr. Subaudite.

"True, but all in the army or navy; some

in the ——; but never mind—do go and call on Mr. Smudgerton."

"That's enough — I catch it," said Mr. Subaudite, imitating Mr. Gabberton Swift so accurately, as to cause the Dean to descend from his dignity, and laugh so loudly, that James came in to inquire if his master had called.

"No, sirrah," said the Dean, "I did not call, and you know I did not. Show Mr. Subaudite out, and never presume again to—"

"I don't mean to it. I gives warning in the presence of a witness. I quits this day month," said James, for the butlership had been given away to another.

The Dean bowed to the senior tutor, and bade James come in to receive his wages, and quit immediately. A few words of explanation, however, and a promise of the first vacant good office, induced James to apologize for his rudeness and resume his duties.

We must follow Mr. Subaudite to the rooms of Mr. Smudgerton.

He was accompanied by a worthy and ex-

honours of the University. He h
taken his bachelor's degree; an
friend, Mr. Subaudite, thought
making him the private tutor of
gerton, he should enable him to
fortably in college, and try for
open to those who have taken th
gree, instead of sending him into s
family as a crammer of the juveni

They reached Mr. Robert S
door and knocked. No answer w
The college tutor knocked again
and, finding that his application
cessful, took out his card and
door, meaning to leave it on the

He entered the room, and f
great surprise, the owner of th
asleep on the sofa.

"I should fear not, sir: these tankards and these bottles—I—"

"Dear me! I did not observe them. He cannot have been—can he?"

"Drinking? I should hope not."

"No, he has been writing—see, here is the manuscript," said Mr. Subaudite, taking out his spectacles, in order that he might decipher it more clearly.

"Dear me, what does it mean?"

To two setters . . .	£10	10	0
one pole cat in pup . .	2	2	0
one one-eyed ferret . .	0	2	6
one magpie as talks . .	0	3	0
two snakes as is tame .	0	5	0
one dozen rats, warranted .	0	6	0
two white mice and a squirrel	0	9	0
	£13	17	6

Receeved the above as part set-off of chalks, cribbage, and put scores.

ROBERT SMUDGERTON.

And promises to take out the remainder in animals and drink.

At the bottom of this interesting document was written—

I agrees to the above.

TOM SHARP, his × mark.

Had any one seen the look which Mr. Subaudite cast on his protégé, the expectant tutor of this hopeful youth, they would never have forgotten it. It was the amalgam of disgust and despair.

"Let us leave him, let us leave him," he said, sighing. "Oh that the Dean had taken my hint!"

"Hilloh! who are *you?* What the dev—! Oh, I really beg pardon. I have been—eh, where have I been? But you'll take another tankard—don't be regular muffs and say no," said Bobby Smudge, rousing himself into an indistinct wakefulness.

"Mr. Smudgerton, I will sit down, and beg of my young friend, whom I meant to introduce to you as your tutor, to do the same, but we are really ——"

"And so am I," said Bobby—"awfully dry—ring the bell! Oh, curse these college rooms, they never has any—how's the governor? Quite right, I hope?"

"This is horrible," said Mr. Subaudite.

"We had really better retire," said his young friend.

"Pooh! — stuff! — we'll soon have them filled again," said Bobby, trying to get to the window to call his scout. He fell down, however, *in transitu*; the young man picked him up, and threw him rather than laid him upon his sofa, where he remained talking incoherently for some time.

"Dreadful! horrible! ah! ahah! what *is* this? take it off. I shall die, I know I shall. Ah! ah!" The first class man rushed to Mr. Subaudite's assistance, and found a beautiful green snake curled round one of his legs. In less than one minute, the fellow-one of the "two snakes as is tame" was curling round the other leg, and poor Mr. Subaudite, who had a great horror of reptiles, fell flat upon the floor.

"Hurrah! he's down!" shouted Master Bobby. "Thought me a mere country fool, but I have done him brown, very brown, indeed."

"What is all this about?" said the Dean, entering the rooms with Lord Shorte—a most unusual and condescending act on the part of one of our Deans.

An explanation was speedily given. Mr. Subaudite was released from the poor, innocent snakes; and Master Bobby Smudge roused from his spirituous slumbers, but only to tell the Dean that he was a humbug; Lord Shorte, that his designs on him were "no go;" and Mr. Sabaudite and his young friend, the tutor *in posse*, that they might go to —— where we cannot mention.

"I give him up," said Lord Shorte.

"I shall expel him," said the Dean.

"Rusticate him for ever," said the humane tutor; "it will do as well, and not be thought so severe a sentence."

Mr. Bobby Smudge was allowed to take his name off the books, and went down to tell his friend, Mr. Gabberton Swift, how ill he had been used, accompanied by two setters, one pole-cat in pup, one one-eyed ferret, one magpie as talks, two snakes as is tame—no rats; for they were not warranted to keep—but two white mice and a squirrel.

"That's enough! I catch it! You are done for life. No little Miss Lady Shorte for you," said Mr. Swift.

"She be sniggled, or any thing else! I'll go and enjoy life," said Bobby Smudge.

He did enjoy life — but for a very short period, for he was bitten by a fox in the thumb, and died raving-mad.

Tom Sharp and his son Will, when they read of it in the papers, smoked an extra pipe, and said they were very sorry for it, for that Mr. Robert Smudgerton was such a very nice young man.

CHAPTER VII.

THE COMMEMORATION.

Nunc est bibendum, nunc pede libero
Pulsanda *Townhall*; nunc *elegantioribus*,
Ornare *the tables of college*
Tempus erat, *spreadibus*, sodales.
HORATIUS ALTERATUS.

"Well, I declare I am almost as wearied with telling you my tales," said Tom, "as I am at Commemoration-time, when my clapper is going from morning until night, or more poetically,

'From sunny morn to dewy eve.'"

"Commemoration! what is that?" I inquired.

"The annual meeting whereat the Professor of Orotory (the Public Orator, as he is called) makes a very intelligible Latin speech

to the ladies, God bless them! and to country gentlemen, on the merits and virtues of those antients who, from the best motives no doubt, founded colleges, endowed fellowships, and bequeathed livings and libraries for the promotion of literature and the comfort of learned men. It is also called the *Encænia.*"

"*Encænia?* why that is the name of a Jewish festival—the celebration of the building of the Temple. How does it apply to a Christian ceremony?"

"Never you mind about that; we call it by that name in Oxford, from Vice-Chancellor to Poker-Bearer, so it must be right: — *humanum est errare* does not apply to Oxford when classicality is called in question."

"Nor to our sister, Cambridge, I presume, when anything mathematical is on the *tapis.*"

"Of course not; neither of us can be *radically* wrong, for *we* spend our days in digging for Latin and Greek roots; *they*

theirs in searching for the roots of cubes and all sorts of figures."

"It must be a most solemn and serious sight, this Commemoration," said I. "In raking up the *manes* of so many pious and charitable individuals, the minds of all must be—"

"Ah! ha! ha!" burst out Great Tom. "Bless your ignorant freshness! Gloomy! Serious! Stuff! The Commemoration-week is the jolliest in all the year. Such a crowd of lions and lionesses, with all their cubs and —"

"Oh! I suppose Wombwell comes down with his exhibition at that time. It must be a good speculation," said I.

Tom laughed in a succession of bom, bom, boms, which fairly shook his tower, and made me tremble for the stability of the beam above him.

"You are *very* green, indeed," said he, "not to know that, in Oxford, lions and lionesses mean masculine and feminine strangers, and cubs, their little dears of both sexes,

whom they bring up with them to see their brothers and the nice young men at college. If you have such a thing as a maiden aunt, a sister, or a cousin, mind and invite her to see you next June. You cannot please her more. What with balls, concerts, archery, and Latin speeches, boat-racing, champagning, and Blenheim and Nunehamizing, their days and nights fly like the champagne-corks, and their spirits flow like the ale-barrels in the college butteries."

"It must be very jolly, but rather expensive, I fear," said I.

"You an undergraduate, and talk of the expense of anything! Pooh! Tell them to put it down in the bill, and think of the amount when you have taken your degree. If you should not happen to think of it then, your purveyors will not fail to remind you of it. Like me, your tradesman can't go on ticking for ever without being wound up. Just lie still, and I will give you a notion of some of the fun of a Commemoration."

We had at one time two very lively brothers

laughing themselves, or causing
laugh; it was impossible to be d
company; for, what with jokes,
and harmless mischief—they had
about them—they afforded every
of amusement.

Their name was Leech, and ho
guish the two when speaking of th
some little difficulty. Leech senic
junior was too formal; old Leech
Leech not appropriate, for eac
appeared to be of exactly the
the other. As to their christian
elder was called Horatio, and
Cicero, through the excessive c
their governor, and it was impos
the *short* for either of them, and
by their full length would no
familiar enough. Altogether, it

younger to agricultural pursuits—nicknamed them Horse-Leech and Cow-Leech, and by those names, degrading as they appeared at first, they were ever after known. It was some little time before they knew of the method by which they were distinguished; and when they were informed of it by what Sheridan calls a "d—d good-natured friend," they were a little indignant, and felt inclined to resent the affront; but their good nature got the better of their resentment, and they burst out laughing, declaring the notion was not a bad one, and that they would pardon the impudence of their nicknamer, "for the fun of the thing."

We all of us have our little peculiarities, and no wonder, therefore, that the Leeches had theirs. Horatio, or Horse-Leech, as I have said, was very fond of horses; but, although he was almost always with his own horses, or viewing the steeds of other men, he was not one of that kind of men who spend their lives in a stable, and in converse with grooms and hack-men. He was never seen sitting on a corn-bin, smoking cigars and

a man who could drive them as
be driven; and although he pr
box-seat upon a coach, and ever
handled the ribbons, and discour
qualities of the leaders and wh
even entertained the driver with
two of sherry on a journey, he n
that he was a gentleman, and the
side, though a skilful driver, not
mere driver—waggoner, is, I b
more fashionable name.

He never dealt with a dealer hi
when he had inspected his stabl
manded the price of any nag th
fancy, he entered his name and c
his price, in his pocket-book, an
his groom to complete or resign t
of it. So cool, indeed, was his

looked upon in that light, that he was known in all the best stable-yards in Oxford by the title of "the reserved swell, as could only purchase by proxy." His judgment, however, was so good, and his liberality so notorious, that his appearance after a horse-fair was always hailed with pleasure.

The peculiar pursuit of the younger brother, Cow-Leech, was, as I have said, agriculture. He was almost mad on the subject. He would ride miles to see a ploughing-match or a cattle-show, and looked upon the best ploughman and the best fatter of beasts upon the paternal estate as somebody whose acquaintance was worth cultivating. When at home, he was up with that early riser the lark, and was seldom seen within doors during the day. His old pony, with a sort of wallet slung to his saddle-flaps, might be seen tied to a gate, or wandering and plucking the herbage at his leisure in some green lane, while its master was tossing the grass about in the hay season, or helping to pitch corn in the harvest-time, with a crowd of labourers round him, chatting freely with him, and

laughing at his "quips and cranks," merry jokes, and comic stories, as if they were not mere serfs of the soil. Yet Cicero was the master and gentleman with them. He never heard a rude remark, a vulgar expression, or an oath uttered in his presence. Every labourer felt that he was in the presence of a superior as well as a friend. They toiled harder than they would have done for any other master, and sought no extra reward for their exertions, but his approbation, and an occasional supply from the well-filled casks of the Grange cellars, when they had earned the indulgence by a day of excessive toil. They were paid no more wages than they would have been paid by a renting-farmer, though they worked much harder; and yet, out of the numerous ricks and corn-stacks that stood on the various farms upon Colyton Grange, not one had ever been fired, although some of the neighbouring farms had not escaped the visits of incendiaries.

The old Squire was rather a curious character. He had been an Eaton boy and an Oxford man. At school he was notorious

for an inability to do a copy of Latin verses without filling up a long line, if he wanted an ending to it, with *Proh! Jupiter inquit.* As he introduced this, his favourite phrase, into sacred as well as profane subjects, it got him into several birchical scrapes, and procured him the *sobriquet* of Jupiter Leech, which, of course, adhered to him after he entered at Oxford.

At the University, from his ill-success, probably at school, he felt no ambition to shine as a classical constellation. He hated the classics, if the truth must be told, and, in order to amuse himself, began to cultivate the science of natural philosophy. Great was the dismay of the learned professor of that science, when he issued his terminal notice of a lecture, and found it answered by a would-be pupil. His office had hitherto been a sinecure, but now he must read up and give a lecture. He wisely selected the most abstruse subject he could think of, and treated it still more abstrusely. The *ruse* had the desired effect. The pupil was so utterly confounded by the string of long and hard

pursuit of knowledge, under
great as were placed before him
dite lecturer, but contented
reading and experimentalizing
rooms, greatly to the detriment
ture, which was not improved
ment being converted into a lab
wrote several very elaborate
pneumatics, electricity, chemist
nism—for he did not confine h
particular branch of science—
to the best conducted journal
but whether he wrote badly or
any fresh light upon his subje
little known in scientific circl
reception, I cannot say; I c
that of his numerous contrib
appeared in print until he c
send a paper to a newly-born

duck-weed on the surface of ponds and ditches."

So delighted was the Squire with the kindness of the editor in inserting this article, and so pleased at seeing himself in Bourgeois type, that he bought 100 copies of No. 1., and went to a great expense in sending them off by post to all his acquaintances; and a great deal of trouble in writing letters to assure them that the paper signed Investigator was *his*. Even in after-life, a copy of this No. 1. always occupied a conspicuous place on the book-table, and any one who wished to be invited to stop and dine at Colyton Grange had only to take it up and appear to be absorbed by the paper signed Investigator, to ensure his wishes being fulfilled.

The Squire did not go up for a degree, or even for his responsions, but, as his father died early, he left college, married a neighbouring lady, and settled down quietly at the Grange, where he would have pursued practically those studies which his lady, dreading the effects of acids and alkalies upon

carpets and curtains, and fumes of gases on her husband's constitution, compelled him to attend to only in theory. He amused himself very harmlessly, in keeping tables of the weather; the rises and falls of thermometer and barometer; wrote several profound treatises on meteorology, which were not inserted in the journals to which they were sent, and spent all his leisure time in trying to get himself made a fellow of some scientific society; but, as he went to work to effect his object in a straightforward way, he did not succeed.

As he was a good master, a kind neighbour, and never *acted* as a justice of the peace, although he was enrolled in the list of his county, he was very much beloved; and, in spite of his eccentricities and very prosy lectures after dinner, Colyton Grange was seldom without a succession of visiters.

The Squiress was a placid, calm, country lady, who had acted the hospitable hostess and the Lady Bountiful to the satisfaction of high and low, rich and poor; and, as long as every thing was neat and tidy about her, and her servants were attentive to their duties,

and cleanly in their habits and personal appearance, and the poor, who were the objects of her benevolence, were respectful in their demeanour and attended their parish church regularly, cared not a dump for what was going on in the other parts of the world. Her family was reduced by deaths, at different periods, to the two boys, Horatio and Cicero; and, of course, she believed them to be the very models of adolescency.

There was another member of the family whom I must introduce, as he will appear upon my stage hereafter. This was a brother of the Squire's, known to every body in the Grange, and without it, as Uncle Tom. No one ever spoke of him or called him by any other name. If he had been saluted as Mr. Thomas Leech, I doubt whether he would have known if he were the person addressed.

He was an odd-looking man, for his mouth was a little out of the horizontal, and he squinted with one eye, which did not turn inwardly over his nose, but outwardly over his right shoulder. He was conscious of this defect in the arrangement of his optics,

and to hide it he had a trick, if he was speaking to any one, of throwing his head over his right shoulder, the side on which the queer eye was situated, and looking with the one good eye at the person whom he addressed.

He had been brought up at Eton with his brother, but refused to go to college, as he preferred staying at home and looking over the farms, and more especially the garden, of which he was very fond, and really understood the cultivation. He had his peculiarity, and it was this,—he could not bear the presence of any woman, except his sister-in-law. It was said that he had made violent love to a lady in his early days, and had been jilted by her for a recruiting-sergeant, who, like Mr. Patrick Carey, had the outward essentials of manhood more fully developed than Uncle Tom, who was slight and slender, and rather effeminate in appearance. This feeling caused him to absent himself from his brother's table whenever female visiters were at the Grange, and as that occurred frequently he was rarely a guest at the dinner-table.

Uncle Tom was of great service to his philosophic brother; for, when the boys were away from home, he took upon himself the management of the stud, and the overlooking of the farms, and received all the rents, and paid all the bills. This, too, he did in so business-like a way that no lawyer was needed to manage affairs at Colyton Grange. He had a fortune independent of his brother, which he nursed with the greatest care, meaning to bestow it in equal portions on his nephews at his decease, provided they married parties whom he might deem eligible partners, and not likely to jilt them.

Having thus introduced some of my chief *dramatis personæ* as briefly as I well could, to make the little events I am about to record understandable, you will oblige me by fancying yourself in the breakfast-parlour at Colyton Grange, on the morning of a very fine day in the beginning of June.

The Squire and his lady are *vis-à-vis*, and Uncle Tom between them in his usual fustian shooting-coat, cord-shorts, and long leather gaiters. Two ladies are visiting at the Grange,

but, as Uncle Tom knows that they have their coffee and rolls taken up to them in their dressing-rooms, he has ventured in to breakfast. In the midst of the repast, the letter-bag is brought in, and the Squire, with great ceremony, selects a key from the bunch of seals, rings, and keys attached to his watch-chain, and opens it; he performs the operation rather nervously, for he hopes that it may contain an announcement that he has been elected an F.R.S., or that his paper "On the Prevalence of Gossamers in Nut-tree Covers in the Months of September and October" has been accepted by the scientific periodical to which he has sent it for the fifth time. Uncle Tom, who never expects a letter from any body, goes on quietly with his rasher, and Mrs. Leech amuses herself by looking at her list, to see to what number of poor widows, bed-ridden old men, and young labourers' wives in interesting conditions, she is to send those little comforts which make life something more than bearable.

"Bless me! it's very odd! unaccountably so! No letter from the society! no notice of

my paper!" said the Squire, laying a letter, a note, and a newspaper aside, as if valueless.

"You've said so every day for these twelve years," said Uncle Tom, looking at his sister-in-law, but looking as if he was looking at her husband.

"Never mind, my dear, leave the F.R.S.'s to themselves; and as to your paper, write another, it will amuse you, and do quite as much good as if it were printed," said the lady.

"It's very odd! unaccountably odd, marm! that you have made that same observation every morning for many years — vary it, marm, vary it," said the Squire, slowly removing his spectacles, pulling his chair up to the table, and going on with his meal.

"That's a hand I ought to know," said Uncle Tom, putting the letter upon the point of his right shoulder to get a clear view of the direction. "Why, it is from Horatio, and bears the Oxford postmark."

"Give it to me, Tommy, give it to me," said the lady. "The dear boy! how clear he writes!"

"Only a little request for money, to pay off the terminal ticks, I'll be bound," said the Squire; "but read it, marm, read it; it's very odd, unaccountably odd, that you women never will open a letter until you have read the direction ten times over, and examined it, from the seal to the postmark, as if you had never seen them before."

Mrs. Leech did what her husband called so "unaccountably odd" very deliberately, and then still more deliberately went to her work-table and looked for a pair of scissors to cut the paper round the seal, for fear of tearing away some valuable portion of the written interior; Uncle Tom eyeing her all the while, although he seemed to be looking in a contrary direction.

"It is very odd, unaccountably odd, that you will not read that letter aloud, marm."

"Oh, it is merely to say they break up—"

"*Go down*, marm; they never *break-up* after they leave school."

"Well, go down on the 15th—that they want you to send a cheque for £250, and that they are to have a grand Commemoration

this year, and a great many grand folks are to be honoured with degrees. There is a list of names, but I don't know any of them; and then there is a lot of inquiries about the colts and fillies from Horatio; and a postscript from Cicero, full of questions about the crops, the wool, and the next ploughing-match—that is all."

"It's very odd, unaccountably odd, marm, that you cannot either read my boy's letter yourself, or let me read it," said the Squire.

"Or me, marm," said Uncle Tom; "you know *I* must answer it."

"Well, there it is; read it while I go and see that old Richard has the village basket properly filled," said the lady, handing the letter to her husband, who had it quietly taken out of his hand by Uncle Tommy before she could make her exit.

Uncle Tommy put the letter upon his right shoulder and read it aloud. There was nothing in it that had not been alluded to in the brief summary of its contents by the Squiress; but a name had reached the Squire's ear, when the list of those who were to have honorary

degrees conferred upon them was read, that engaged his most serious attention.

"It is very odd, unaccountably odd; but I think, Tommy, you said that the Baron Von Inkstandhausen of Heidelberg is to receive an honorary D.C.L?"

"To be sure—who is he?"

"It is very odd, unaccountably odd, how very ignorant you are, brother Tom, on subjects connected with science! The Baron Von Inkstandhausen is a great natural philosopher, and has made his name illustrious from discovering the anatomical cause of the wonderful agility and powers of jumping possessed by that curious little insect the flea."

"What, is he the man who goes about with the industrious fleas?" asked Uncle Tom.

"Very odd, unaccountably odd! Such ignorance! but then it's excusable in a man who despises science, and sticks to the stable and the farmyard. The Baron Von Inkstandhausen is a man whose acquaintance I, in common with all scientific men, would give worlds to obtain."

"Then why do you not go up to Oxford

and get introduced to him? I dare say he would give you his most intimate friendship for a good dinner and the run of the wine-bin; you can take a jar of pickled cabbage in your pocket, and call it *saur-kraut*, and if that don't *clench* your acquaintance with him I do not know what will."

The Squire frowned at Uncle Tom, and said it was unaccountably odd that he should entertain such degrading ideas of a German philosopher. He added, much to Uncle Tom's surprise, that he should take his advice for once, and go up to Oxford for the purpose of renewing his acquaintance with some old friends, and being properly introduced by the Professor of Chemistry to the Baron Von Inkstandhausen.

"Then I must go with you," said Uncle Tom; "for you know so little of what you call mere mundane affairs, that you will be cheated by every postboy and turnpike-keeper on the road."

"Go with me! of course you will. Do you think I could travel without you? It is very odd, unaccountably odd, that you should

dream of such a thing! We will post up; so order the chariot and everything to be ready by the 13th. I must prepare a few things to take up with me, to amuse the boys and their friends."

Uncle Tom *slewed* his eye round over his shoulder, and threw a look of inquiry into it; but, as he seemed to be looking at the peacock on the terrace wall, the Squire did not reply to it, but retired to his study to commence his preparations. Mrs. Leech, who, in spite of her husband's complaint, that "it was very odd, unaccountably odd, that she would interrupt him in his studies," went into the room every hour to see that he was not mixing acids and alkalies, analyzing earths, and making combustibles, wondered what he was about to do with several queer-looking machines, the names and uses of which she knew not, and which he was diligently engaged in packing into as small a space as possible. When she heard that he was going up to Oxford to the Commemoration, she thought that he was going to sell some of his useless machinery to some erudite individuals in that

learned University who would be able to turn them to a better account than he had done, and was highly pleased; so she did not interrupt him any more, but amused herself with seeing that everything he would want, and many things that he would not want, were properly prepared for the journey.

Uncle Tom considerately thought that the boys would like to be apprised of their father's intention of paying them a visit, as he knew that many little arrangements would require to be made in their rooms, to render them in a fit state to be visited by the governor; he therefore sat down, and in a very odd position, for he was obliged to look sideways at the paper before him, much as a duck does when he is eyeing a worm at the bottom of a deep ditch. He wrote the following characteristic letter, in which he enclosed a cheque for £300:—

"Colyton Grange, June 10th.

"My dear Boys,

"Brother and I dine with you on the 13th, at half-past 5 precise. Mother stays at

home. Procure beds handy, and not at an inn, as they are apt to be *one-horse-chaisey!* Hem! You know what I mean—hate *bugs* and hum*bugs*. Enclosed is cheque for £300. No ticks or antics while the governor is in view, eh? Horatio, all the horses are well, and the fillies and colts going on famously. Cicero, the wheats are in bloom, the beans in pod, and the pease fit for hacking. The clovers run short, but the stock are all well, and so are the labourers. More, both of you, when we meet.

"Your affectionate uncle,

"TOM.

"PS. Brother is packing up some of his queer traps, to astonish a Baron—Von Inkstandhausen by name. If you know him, ask him to dinner, and be sure give him some pickled cabbage—he's a German."

Having completed and sealed this epistle, Uncle Tom set about ordering the chariot and post-horses to be ready early on the morning of the 13th, and then went round the stables and farms, to give such directions

as he thought would ensure the comforts of the animals, and the proper progress in farming operations during his short absence.

The Oxford brothers were breakfasting together in the rooms of the elder, Horatio, and were violently engaged in getting up a Greek play for their collections, amidst coffee, rolls, and strawberries, when the letter from Uncle Tom arrived. Horatio laughed heartily when he had read it, and handed it to his brother, who joined him in the laugh at first, and then suddenly stopped and looked serious

"The idea of the Governor and Uncle Tom. coming up!" said Horatio.

"And the notion of asking an unknown German quack to dinner, and entertaining him with pickled cabbage!" said Cicero. "Can't we put them off? for you know that we have invited a lot of men—the racing crew, and the crew of the Torpids, to supper on the 13th."

"No; it will not do. Besides, what does it matter? Uncle Tom is a regular brick,

and will enjoy the fun, and I do not think that the governor will dislike it. We will get the German, if he is presentable, and can find any one to introduce us to him. He, I hope, will not find fault with the hock."

"If he does not like it, he can send us over an aume, if he pleases, ready for his next visit," said Cicero; "but it strikes me that it will be as well to send for the upholsterer to put our rooms a little in order before the arrival of papa, eh?"

"Oh, nonsense! He knows what college is, and I see nothing he can object to or complain about here."

"Why, I do not think a sofa with a loose back and three legs, or a reading-chair with one arm amputated, and a set of rickety dining-tables, at all desirable; and I do think that if the meerschaums, boxing-gloves, tandem-whips and bridles, were taken down from their nails, the rooms would look a little less like a pawnbroker's shop," said Cicero.

"Yes, true enough; and Uncle Tom would rather be displeased than not at the sight of your collection of operatic and theatrical

female favourites; so you must down with them, and replace them with something wherewith his modesty will not be shocked."

"And that Venus must be dressed or discarded, that is very certain, and Mistress Psyche would look all the better if she were clad in a decent garb; but we will send for old Scraper the furniture-man, and give him orders to settle the rooms soberly and snugly. Now let us knock off the last five hundred lines of Madame Medea, and then go and get lodgings for our visitors."

The play was finished, and the lodgings—two good bedrooms at Adams's, the bootman, opposite my tower—engaged before twelve o'clock. The cook was ordered to prepare a good dinner in their rooms on the 13th, for which leave was easily obtained from the Dean, when the visit of Leech *père*, with his brother, was made known to him. As both the Squire and Uncle Tom were fond of port wine, the afternoon was pleasantly spent in tasting the best that Syms and all the other wine-merchants could produce.

Now tasting wine in hot weather is very

agreeable, but rather dangerous, as, instead of performing the operation in the scientific method adopted by the trade, the thirst occasioned by the thermometer at 80° is apt to induce one to swallow the contents of the glasses submitted to us for our approbation. The brothers, who were generally very moderate in their potations, were the least in the world overcome by the number of wines they had tasted; and when they had decided upon the style of wine best suited to the Governor's taste—full-flavoured, oleaginous, yet leaving a delicious roughness upon the palate instead of the nauseating sugar-sweetness which spoils the ports of modern days—they issued from the cellars with rather unsteady steps and flushed countenances.

"We are too late for hall-dinner, *per Jovem!*" said Horatio, looking up at Carfax clock.

"So we are. Well, never mind," said Cicero; "let us have a lamb-chop at the Star; the cook there has a proper notion of his art."

A few minutes found them in the coffee-

room of that, then, well-frequented hotel. Several men were dining there; but the moment they had eaten their chops they took up their caps and gowns, and went off to some friend's rooms to wine.

When Horatio and Cicero Leech had finished their cheese, and ordered a bottle of cool claret, there was but one individual besides themselves left in the room; and a very odd-looking individual he was. He wore a lanky, yellow-tinged pair of mustachoes, with whiskers completely covering his chin, to correspond; his hair was parted in the centre, and combed down straight over the collar of his coat; his deeply-seated blue eyes were covered with a large pair of tortoiseshell-mounted spectacles, and his nose was begrimed with yellow snuff, which he was perpetually employed in taking from a large jewelled silver box. He was dressed in long-waisted, dark-green frock-coat, drab trousers, and very square-toed boots. He had finished his dinner, and was sipping some Rhenish wine. By his side lay a large handsome *écume-de-mer* pipe, and a bladder containing

tobacco, which he had pushed on one side when the waiter assured him that no smoking was allowed in the coffee-room.

"What a guy!" said Horatio, not quite *sotto voce*.

"A regular quiz, *et nullus error!*" said Cicero.

"Let us drink to his very particular salubrity. He is a foreigner, and don't understand English, I dare say, so we ought to be civil to him. Here goes, old fellow!—here's to all friends over the Herring Pond," said Horatio.

"Your jolly health, old gentleman!" added Cicero.

Now, as both of them, in tossing off their bumpers, did so in a peculiar way, although they were not aware of it, the stranger smiled a joyous smile, filled his tumbler—for he despised a diminutive wine-glass—and made the same sort of motion with his hand ere he emptied it. He then left his seat, brought his bottle and tumbler with him, and, placing himself at the brothers' table, seized their right hands successively, and gave them such

a severe grip as made them glad when the operation was over.

"I am delight to find two *proders;* we shall unite and enjoy ourselfs more as if we was strangers," said the foreigner.

"How the deuce could he know we were *brothers?*" whispered Horatio.

"By a family likeness, I suppose. But let us draw him out, and get some fun out of him," said Cicero.

"Beautiful box that, sir," said Horatio.

"Ya, ya, yash, de pox is a peautiful pox, and was given to me by my var good vriend de Brince, when I bresented to him a copy of ma pook."

"Oh, you're an author, are you?" asked Cicero.

"Ya, ya, yash; I have bublish mosh."

"On what subject, may I ask?"

"Oh, I write mosh—vare mosh; put brincipally on de insect and de worm—what you shall call de natural history," said the stranger.

"I say, Cicero, I'll venture a pony that

this is the very German whom the Governor is coming up to be introduced to."

"Gad! if so, we're in luck. Sound him!"

"Sound him! I'll ask him at once. Have I the honour of speaking to the Baron—?"

"Ya, ya, yash, I am de Paron, ma young vriends and proders."

"The Baron Von Inkstandhausen?" said Cicero.

"What is dat? Bronounce him again."

"The Baron Von Inkstandhausen," said Horatio, slowly and plainly.

"Ya, ya, yash; dat is how I am call; put you bronounce him so English-like, I not know him at virst."

"My dear sir, I am delighted to see you. My father, Mr. Leech of Colyton Grange, in Northamptonshire, is coming up to-morrow on purpose to make your acquaintance. He is fond of science, thinks himself a great natural philosopher, and has written a great deal on the subject, though he has only published one paper—'On the Cause of Duckweed in Ponds and Ditches.' Did you ever meet with it?"

"Ma dare young vriend, I nevare travel widout it, it is so vare clevare," said the Baron, taking a larger pinch than usual. "I shall mosh like to be known to your Bappa."

"Well, then, you must come and dine with him at my rooms to-morrow, at half-past five," said Horatio, handing the Baron his card.

"Come and breakfast, and spend the day," said Cicero. "We'll lionize you!"

"Ma coot vriends, you overbower me. Put I nevare preak ma fast—nevare; I only take de bipe and de coffee in ma ped. I will have great bleasure in making de accquaintance of your excellent bappa at de dinner," said the Baron. "And now, as we are broders, I shall order some wine of a petter quality, and we shall drink at mine exbense."

The Baron rang the bell, and ordered in half a dozen of Rudesheimer in ice, and the party spent a most agreeable evening; the young men assuring one another, as they went to their rooms, not at all the worse for the cool light wine they had been drinking, that they had never met with a more agreeable

and accomplished man than the Baron in their lives.

"Very gentlemanly, too, of him to pay for the wine," said Cicero—"very indeed!"

Precisely at a quarter past five on the Tuesday, the day before the Commemoration, amidst the number of carriages that arrived in Oxford, the chariot from Colyton Grange might have been seen pulling up at my tower gateway. Cicero was standing ready to receive his father and uncle, while Horatio was busily employed in decanting the wine. A few minutes sufficed for the Squire and Uncle Tom to dress for dinner; and as soon as they had reached the young men's rooms, the Baron Von Inkstandhausen arrived, very superbly dressed, and was introduced in due form to Squire Leech, who nervously grasped his hand, and expressed himself as too highly honoured by the condescension of so great a man. Uncle Tom threw a look at the Baron over his right shoulder, and whispered to Horatio that "he wanted trimming about the muzzle, and that his mane would be none the worse for being pulled and combed."

The dinner was excellent, and every one did justice to it; but no one came near the Baron, who, although there was no pickled cabbage provided, ate enormously, and apologized for it by saying, "he had noting all day pefore put his bipes."

When the wine and dessert were placed on the table, and the servants had retired, the Squire filled a bumper, and proposed—"The scientific world; more particularly the gentleman who had honoured them with his company that day." It was drunk with enthusiasm by all, and *in iisdem verbis*, except by Uncle Tom, who had a bad memory for words, and took off his bumper to "the aforesaid."

The Baron bowed, with his right hand, covered with rings and rather dirty about the nails, upon his left breast, and, seizing upon a tumbler, which was placed near the water-jug in the centre of the table, filled it to the brim; then, acknowledging the compliment that had been paid him, briefly but gratefully drained his goblet at a draught, and sat

down, saying, "that the borts was cool wines, but sboiled de plood."

Horatio took the hint, and placed some claret near his guest, with another tumbler, which was speedily filled and emptied to the health of the Squire, who, in returning thanks, went through the rise and progress of the science of natural philosophy *ab ovo usque ad mala*, and ended his long oration by again expressing his delight at forming the acquaintance of a man upon whom the eyes of every scientific person were turned with admiration.

The Baron smiled and bowed; but, catching Uncle Tom's queer eye turned upon him, not very scientifically, burst into a loud laugh, in which the brothers, when they caught the cause of it, could not refrain from joining.

"As dere is no lady, and dis is de brivate rooms, I will make pold and light ma bipe," said the Baron, extracting his meerschaum and tobacco-bag from his coat-pocket, and proceeding composedly to strike a light with flint, steel, and German tinder.

Now the poor Squire had a great aversion to the fumes of tobacco at all times, but especially when he was drinking his port wine. But what could he do? He could not interfere with the enjoyments of the greatest natural philosopher of his day, one who was about to be presented with an honorary D.C.L. on the morrow. He submitted, with a bad grace however, much to Uncle Tom's amusement, who looked at the Baron, and winked; but, as his eye was directed to a corner book-shelf, that learned foreigner did not think it was intended for him, so he did not return it.

The Squire proposed many toasts, and made many remarks which he thought calculated to draw his son's guest into a philosophic discussion; but he was deceived, for the Baron merely bowed, and drank, and smoked his pipe, seldom making a remark, beyond "a peautiful pottle and peautiful topacco!"

This was very vexing; and, in order to ensure a display of the Baron's learning, the Squire put a direct question to him, which ought to have elicited a learned disquisition

on some peculiarly difficult point, which agitated the erudite minds of all natural philosophers at that particular time.

"Ma var dear sar," said the Baron, rolling out a volume of smoke, "pusiness is pusiness, and bleasure is bleasure: bleasure to-day—pusiness to-morrow." Nor would he say another word; so that the Squire did all the loud talking, while Uncle Tom held a whispered conversation about the horses and colts with Horatio, and about turnips and swedes with Cicero.

"My dear father," said Horatio, when the time for coffee arrived, "I know you will excuse our leaving you over your coffee with the Baron. The fact is, we had invited the boat's crew to sup with us to-night before we got your letter, so we could not put them off, but have ordered supper in another man's rooms."

"Uncle Tom will join us," said Cicero; "and you and the Baron can do a little bit of philosophy."

"Mosh opliged," said the Baron; "put I would rather do a pit of subber."

"And I," said the Squire, "should like to

join your young friends, and see them all enjoying themselves."

"Hurrah!" said Horatio. "Come along, Governor, and let us be jolly!"

"Come along, Baron," said Uncle Tom. "You are not a bad fellow for a foreigner; you can be jolly."

"Ah, ah! you have de eye—what an eye —for de caractare—de phizionomy, eh!"

Uncle Tom felt inclined to knock the Baron down, but he looked so innocent, that Tom thought, after all, he could not have meant the allusion to his divergent eye as an insult.

When they reached the supper-rooms, they found about eighteen men ready assembled, to whom Horatio introduced his father and Cicero, his uncle and the Baron. The unexpected addition of three "old stagers" threw a little damp cloud over the party at first; but it was soon dissipated when the Squire, who was a little affected by his wine and the great deal of talking he had done, cut several very good jokes, and Uncle Tom and the Baron invited everybody to take wine with them. They were soon "hail, fellow! well met!"

The Baron, although he had eaten enough for three at dinner, did great execution on the "proiled pones," and finished off with a large plate of dressed crab. As soon as he had washed down his last plate with some "prown peer," as he called the "pottled borter," he lighted up his "bipe" again, and smoked away as calmly as if he had known all the party all his life.

The Squire and Uncle Tom stopped until the supper was removed and the punch and other liquids placed on the table; they then withdrew, wisely thinking that they should operate as skids on the wheels of joviality.

The Baron said "he should stay and finish his bipe and taste de bonch; he was vare fond of de bonch, put he should speak a word with his coot vrend de Squire in brivate first."

They withdrew into Horatio's bedroom, in the rooms above those in which the supper-party had been held. There, the Baron, after apologizing for the trouble he had given to his "coot vriend," informed him that a remittance which he had expected was not

arrived, and he would be glad of the loan of "twenty or dirty bounds to bay his fees with on to-morrow."

The Squire, quite delighted at the opportunity of obliging so great a natural philosopher, took out his pocket-book, and gave him a bank-note for £50.

The Baron shook him cordially by the hand, and assured him "he would feel vare habby when he saw him rebaid."

The Squire and Uncle Tom then left for their lodgings, and the Baron returned to the supper-rooms and resumed his pipe. After listening to many songs, and drinking many toasts, he was called upon, in his turn, for a song or a toast. He complied by singing a German student's song very well, of which the chorus was

"Edite, bibite," &c., &c.

When every one had sung every song he knew, and the party was getting rather slow, the Baron asked his next neighbours "if they ever blayed with the cards?" He was answered affirmatively, and asked to take a hand at *Van John*, as *vingt-et-un* is classically called at Oxford.

The cards were speedily produced; and whilst some of the party amused themselves with their cigars, and singing and talking, a table was made up at *vingt-et-un.* The Baron lost at first, but, when the stakes were doubled, and even quadrupled, his luck began to turn. He won back all he had previously lost, and a little more. He lost so good-naturedly, and won so carelessly—smoking his "bipe," and drinking his "bonch" all the while—that every one was delighted with him, and he received a great many invitations to breakfasts, dinners, and suppers, all of which he was obliged to decline, because "he had promised his vare coot vriend, Mistir Squire Leech, to be his guest, and live at his exbense, while he remained in Oxford."

When they were nearly tired of cards, the natural philosopher condescended to teach them a new German game with the dice. The boxes were produced, and every one in the room staked a sovereign each. Every one then threw three times, and was at liberty to sell his own chance, or buy any other person's: the highest thrown, or the purchaser of

the highest throw, to win the pool. This caused a great deal of speculation and a great deal of betting; and, oddly enough to the Baron, who kept his hands in his pockets until he threw, which he always did last, won seven stakes out of eleven, besides several sums by betting the odds against every caster. A little hazard concluded the evening at about half-past four; and it was quite light when the Baron parted with his young friends at my gateway, assuring them "that their bonch was coot, their bort was coot, and every thing vare bleasant," and that "he should nevare be aple to repay their cootness."

When Horatio and his brother had breakfasted with the Squire and Uncle Tom, all the party agreed to walk up to the Star, and call on the great natural philosopher.

"Waiter," said Horatio, "is the Baron Von Inkstandhausen up yet?"

"Who, sir? We have no such name on our list," replied he of the napkin.

"I mean the gentleman who wined with us, or rather with whom we wined,—half a dozen

of iced Rudesheimer, you know,—the day before yesterday."

"Oh, I know—gent. with smellers. I'll go up and see, sir."

The party sat down in the coffee-room; and William returned, and, in a whisper said, "The man with the smellers has bolted with a basket of master's plate, and left his trunk, which we have broken open, and found full of valuable—brickbats."

Here was a pretty business! Upon inquiry, it was discovered that the Baron was a London pickpocket, who had come down on a speculation. He succeeded pretty well; for, in addition to the Squire's £50, it was found that he had carried off £300 from the young men whom he had so kindly taught the new German game with the dice.

The Squire was greatly disgusted, but Uncle Tom threw such a queer look over his right shoulder at his nephews, that they burst out laughing, in which, after a time, their father joined.

"Come, my dear father," said Horatio to

Squire Leech, as they quitted the Star Inn, after the unpleasant discovery of the sham Baron's real character; "if you intend to go to the University sermon at St. Mary's, you must not delay. The service begins at eleven, and it is already past ten."

"It is very odd, unaccountably odd," replied the Squire of Colyton Grange, "that in these days young men never speak of any thing, or any event, with that accuracy which, as philologists, they ought to observe."

"In what have I betrayed any inaccuracy?" inquired Horatio, not a little surprised at his father's testiness.

"You called it 'the University sermon' at St. Mary's, and it is not the University sermon. The University have nothing to do with it, as a University. It is the Infirmary sermon, and is preached to increase the funds of that most excellent institution, founded by the renowned Dr. Radcliffe."

"But, sir, the Vice-Chancellor, and all the Dons, go in procession with the black-beadles, and poker-bearers, and ——"

"Cicero, don't be vulgar. Call men and

as your father has, you would n
founded a beadle with a beetle."

"I have heard both of them
pretty heartily, sir,—the former
our men, who do not like paying
degree times, and the latter by
keeper, when she has found them
trespasses in her jars of brown su

"Gently, there, Cicero, my
Uncle Tom. "Your father has
hobby, and he does not like to h
spoilt."

"His hobby seems rather incli
this morning," whispered Cicero:
put the strap on."

"The strongest strap that eve
will not keep your father from l

dulging in a long harangue, in which he was scolding Horatio, for supposing, for an instant, that he should go to the Radcliffe Infirmary sermon, until he had fulfilled the principal object of his journey to Oxford, by obtaining an introduction, through his friend, the professor of chemistry, to the *veritable* natural philosopher, the Baron Von Inkstandhausen, by whose double he had been so grossly imposed upon, and defrauded of fifty pounds, in addition to having been made the laughing-stock, *ludibrium*, of the whole philosophical world, who would, he doubted not, shortly be furnished with all the particulars of the "new case of soft-headedness," displayed in himself.

Horatio, of course, could do nothing else but consent to the arrangement suggested by his father, and offered to accompany him to the house of the professor of chemistry at once. But, no: that would not do. Leech *père* chose to go alone. He would have no one present at their interview; "doubtless," as Uncle Tom remarked, *sotto voce*, throwing

his queer eye over his right shoulder, at his younger nephew, "because he was afraid that in recounting the trick the sham Baron had played him, the irresistible ludicrousness of the whole proceeding would produce a loud laugh at his expense."

The point was conceded. A proposition was made that the family should all of them meet in the porch of St. Mary's church, at eleven o'clock; but to that the Squire would not agree. He had made up his mind to pass a philosophical day with the professor of natural philosophy. He would not, however, injure the institution, for whose benefit the sermon was to be preached, by his unavoidable absence from service, but gave Horatio a five-pound note, to put into the plate.

"Well, then, sir, you will perhaps attend the morning concert at three o'clock, and dine in our rooms at seven?" said Horatio.

"It is very odd, unaccountably odd, that I am to be dragged every where but where I wish to go," said the Squire. "You know that I have a contempt for music, as a mere

mechanical art, without any philosophy in it. Any fool can play on a fiddle or a flute."

"But, sir, all the ladies will be there—all the lionesses," &c., began Cicero.

"Then let them fancy themselves she-bears, and dance to the music," said the Squire.

"Give him his head," said Uncle Tom; "he's off. The only chance is to let him go his own pace, until he pulls up of his own accord."

"But as to dinner, sir?" said Horatio.

"At six precisely, in your rooms. As to a party, I shall bring the Professor and the Baron with me; and I have a few little things to exhibit, which will afford them all a rational evening. Order the largest table-cloth in college to be in readiness when coffee is announced; and, do you hear, provide some good hock, but none of your wishy-washy claret."

So saying, Squire Leech left the party, and turned off towards the residence of his old friend the professor of chemistry.

"What can he mean by wanting a large table-cloth?" inquired Cicero.

"Probably," said Horatio, "he means to give a supper *en philosophe*, and wishes to prepare it himself?"

"Missed your leap," said Uncle Tom. "He has got a large box full of all sorts of engines, and intends to exhibit some of his queer machinery for the entertainment of his friends to his own satisfaction. He has never been able to assemble a philosophical party at the Grange since he knocked old Lady Grizzelton's wig off, and dislodged her false teeth by administering an over-dose of the galvanic fluid."

"Absurd!" said Horatio.

"Quite ridiculous!" said Cicero.

"But not the less true," said Uncle Tom.

"And I am to ask a lot of men to dine, and miss the procession of boats, merely to witness tricks upon an air-pump or an electrifying machine?" said Horatio.

"Yes, and get known in the 'versity as 'the gallanty showmen' for the remainder of our college existence," said Cicero.

"You've hit it—laid the whip on the right place," said Uncle Tom.

"How?" asked both his nephews.

"He has brought one with him," replied Uncle Tom, winking with his good eye, and looking at the procession, which had just left the schools, with the queer one.

There was not time for any further questioning, as crowds were hastening by them, and thrusting them from the *pavé*, which they had previously kept three abreast—"curricle fashion, with an outrigger," as Uncle Tom expressed it; so they turned with the press, and sought an entrance into St. Mary's. The church, however, was so full, that they retreated; but, in order that one of the finest institutions of which this country can boast might not suffer by their absence from the service in which its merits were brought before the public, and its interests ably advocated, they retired to a neighbouring stationer's, and enclosed the Squire's five-pound note, with its *fac-simile*, hitherto the property of Uncle Tom, to the secretary and treasurer of the Infirmary.

Horatio then left his uncle and brother to go and order dinner in his rooms, and secure

a party. The former was easily effected, as *Coquus* had laid in a large store of every thing in season; but the latter was a work of some difficulty, as very few men were to be found in their rooms, and those few had engagements of some sort or another, and could not come. Out of his large circle of acquaintances, he could only secure the attendance of half a dozen, and those, unfortunately, the noisiest and most unphilosophical men in our house. His attempt to secure a few quiet out-college men was equally abortive, and for the same reason—they were all engaged, either having parties of their own, or having promised other men to join them. Horatio ordered dinner for twenty, and trusted to chance to fill up his table.

In the mean while, Uncle Tom and his other nephew, Cicero, in order to while away the day, took a stroll out of Oxford to see a model farm, which they fancied might give them a few new notions in improving the lands or crops, flocks or herds, when they returned to Colyton Grange.

As they sauntered up Headington Hill,

towards the spot whence they expected to add to their stock of agricultural knowledge, a carriage, an open barouche, met them, in which were seated a lady, rather past the prime of life, and an elderly gentleman. The box was occupied by a younger man, who, from the family likeness, might have been considered as the brother of the lady within. As the hind-wheel was locked to guard against the perils of the descent of so steep a hill as that of the village of Headington, our friends had an opportunity of observing the appearance of the occupants of the barouche as it proceeded slowly on its downward way. Cicero stared, rather rudely perhaps, and observed to his uncle that the lady put him in mind of a newly-tiled barn—her hair was so very red, and the gentleman on the box of a turkey-cock in a violent passion—as his whiskers strongly resembled the *wattles* of that very iracund bird.

Now, Uncle Tom, as I have said, had entertained a strong antipathy to the fair sex, since "the days that he was jilted in, a long time ago." He never, therefore, looked upon

any woman, if he could avoid it, except his sister-in-law and the aged female domestics at the Grange. He smiled, for he could not help it, at his nephew's odd description of the passing travellers, and winked; but then his eye—the queer one, which was unfortunately next to the carriage—was directed, as he fondly thought, to the summit of a neighbouring elm-tree. That the lady thought different was evident; for, after giving her brother upon the box-seat a pretty hard poke with her parasol, she bowed and smiled benevolently at Uncle Tom; and the gentleman with whiskers like a turkey-cock's wattles lifted his hat. Even the old gentleman inside took off his hat when the carriage was nearly out of his sight, as if he had at length understood from the lady that Uncle Tom was an acquaintance of the family.

"Who are your friends?" asked Cicero.

"My friends!—what friends?" said Uncle Tom.

"The lady and the gentlemen who bowed so politely to you from the green barouche."

"Never saw them before in my life; they must be *your* friends, Cicero."

"Thank you, uncle, but I had much rather not," said Cicero; "but it was a mistake doubtless on their parts, only I must say that the lady seemed not only to recognise you herself, but anxious that the bushy individual on the box should do so too."

"It's very odd, unaccountably odd, as your father would say; but never mind. The chances are incalculable that we never see them again," said Uncle Tom, following his nephew over a stile into a field of wheat, upon the merits or demerits of which they commenced descanting so earnestly, that the vision of the lady in the barouche was soon forgotten.

We must leave them investigating the crops, flocks, herds, and droves of the model farm, and return to Leech *père*.

The professor of chemistry in those days was one of our men. He had, however, with his professorship, accepted of a partner for life, and therefore could not reside in Christ-

sirable residence, either from its l
locality; but it had a large gar
the farthest corner of that garde
distance from any other buildin
old-fashioned greenhouse, capabl
converted at no great expense, an
fect safety to the neighbourhood, i
ratory. He might blow up him
course of his experiments, but
safe. He was a quiet, laborious
moured of his profession, thoug
practised as a medical man; and,
he was permitted to spend his da
greater part of his nights in the
that interesting branch of his
chemistry, he was a happier indiv
many, indeed any, who have no re
in the pleasures of life, and wha
" society."

domestic replied, "No." There was a something, however, a kind of *suppressio veri*, in the manner in which this "no" was uttered that induced the Squire to make further inquiries, and to state his case thus: "I am sorry the Doctor is not at home, for I have come up from the country on purpose to see him; he is an old college friend, and I am sure he will be vexed when he finds that I have come up on purpose to see him, and been disappointed."

As he uttered these words, he put his hands into his waistcoat-pockets, and made a jingling noise like the rattling of silver or gold, and then looked the servant hard in the face.

Jonathan hemmed thrice, walked a little way from the gate into the garden, and, as the Squire followed, pointed to the formal greenhouse, and hemmed again. As he did so, he inadvertently, of course, turned round to shut the gate with his right hand, and his left was placed behind him with the palm extended; into that open palm the Squire dropped a crown-piece, and the fingers closed upon it convulsively; although the person to

whom the palm belonged took no further notice of anything, but, having fastened the gate, walked quietly up to the house. The door of the laboratory — the whilom greenhouse — stood invitingly open. Mr. Leech did not give any masonic signal, but entered. The place was darkened — artificially darkened — for an experiment was being tried, which was not calculated for the "eye of day." It was a something or other in the combustible department of the *ars chymica*. His approach was not observed by the two persons, one the Professor, the other a stranger, who were busily engaged in stirring the materials for the experiment, in a huge crucible, until he called out, "Phosphorus, my old friend, I am delighted to find you."

"Keep stirring for your life," said Phosphorus, *continuetur agitatio*. "Leech, Jupiter Leech, I am glad to see you."

After a very few brief inquiries into each other's welfare, during which the Professor was continually turning round to watch the progress of the composition in the crucible, and saying half audibly, "If he should but

stop stirring for one moment!" the Squire explained the object of his coming up to Oxford, namely, to be introduced to the great natural philosopher, the Baron Von Inkstandhausen.

"That's the man," said the Professor. "It is a great honour for so humble an individual as myself to entertain him in my house, and have his able assistance at a most interesting but rather dangerous experiment. We are on the nature of combustibles, and if he was to cease stirring that crucible but for one minute—bah! we should be gone; never seen again."

"And is that the great man—*the* Inkstandhausen?" asked the Squire. "Pray introduce me to him."

"Not for worlds *now*," said the Professor.

The Baron, however, had heard his name quoted, and when he looked up and saw a gentlemanly person talking with Doctor Phosphorus, he relinquished his stirabout, and advanced to meet him.

"Don't stir—but stir, stir, stir!" shouted Doctor Phosphorus, but too late. Before the

luckily unhurt, rose from the gr
grimed with smoke, ashes, and dust

"I told you how it would be," sa
Phosphorus; "I begged of you n
but to keep on stirring, and you d
stead of keeping stirring, and yo
consequences: allow me to introdu
my friend Mr. Leech, of Colytoi
in ——"

"Bang!" went something else;
several little diminutive "bangs"
at which the Baron, although he
nearly knocked down again, clapped
with delight, and screamed, rather
"*J'avais raison — J'avais raison -
plode twice as vonce.*"

The professor of chemistry was
think that he had been beaten by a
but could not but allow the fact: s

the exploded crucible. He then rubbed the Baron down likewise, and last of all himself.

As the little bangs continued, much to the Baron's joy, who kept dancing about and clapping his hands, the Squire, whose zeal for science, though considerable, was not so great as to induce him to sacrifice life or limb in its service, made his escape from the laboratory, and was shortly followed by his friend and the Baron, to whom he was again introduced in due form.

It was rather amusing to see the Baron and the chemical professor, each holding the country gentleman and amateur philosopher by a coat-button; and, with their very black faces close to his smoked visage, endeavouring to enlighten him on the subject of the experiment which had just noisily reported the success of the Baron's theory. So earnest were they in impressing the whys and wherefores of their views upon the subject, that they did not observe Jonathan, whom the noise of the explosion had summoned from the house, until he exclaimed, "Here's a *mettimurphisy!*—here's a *transmigration!*"

His master looked angrily at Jonathan, and demanded what he meant by interrupting him in the middle of a learned discussion.

Jonathan, instead of replying respectfully, as a judicious servant would have done, burst out laughing, and pointed with his finger first at the Squire, then at the Baron, and, lastly, at his master. This, of course, induced the parties pointed at to examine each other, and then themselves. Imagine their horror and amazement. The Squire, who was dressed, as most old English gentlemen were wont to dress of yore, in a blue coat, buff waistcoat, drab sit-upons, and gray silk stockings, saw his blue coat covered with large red spots, his buff vest converted into a dingy brown, his drabs into a sort of yellowy pink, and his grays turned into dapple grays, the very colour of his own carriage horses. The Baron and the Professor, who had been dressed in black, now presented the appearance of Zamiels, as that character is dressed in the Freischütz. The influence of the nitrous fumes had turned the black to a deep but brilliant red!

Jonathan could not give over laughing, although he tried very hard to do so. The Squire tried to join in the laugh, but could not. The Professor was very angry, and harangued his servant on the impropriety of his proceedings; but the Baron, taking a huge pinch of snuff, coolly observed, "*They vos vare goot acids.*"

What was to be done? The Squire could not walk down to his lodgings to change his dress: the boys would have followed him, huzzaed at him, and probably pelted him, or else have taken him for Mr. Moon, the conjurer. His friend could not supply him with a change by way of loan, for he was a very little thin man, and the Squire tall and stout. As to the Baron, he was located at the Professor's, and of course had only to seek his room and resort to his portmanteau. Jonathan relieved his master's anxiety, by suggesting that a carriage should be procured to convey the Squire to his lodgings. While he was gone to procure it, the Squire's black beaver broad brim began to feel the effects of the nitric and sulphuric acids, and turned as

red as his coat. The Baron suggested the propriety of trying whether an alkali would not neutralize the effect of the acids, and restore the hat to its original nigerity; but, before he and his friend the Professor could agree whether soda or potass was the more compatible alkali to be used, the Star chariot drove up to the gate, and the Squire, having secured the company of the Baron and his friend the Professor of chemistry at dinner, sprang into it, and sat back as far as he could.

He attracted but little attention, until the chariot arrived in the High Street, where its further progress was impeded by a string of vehicles that was waiting to take up their respective burdens as soon as the sermon in aid of the infirmary funds was over: forgetting the "mettimurphisy," and the oddness of his appearance, the Squire let down the windows, and thrust his head out to ascertain the cause of the obstruction. The stoppage unluckily happened just before the door of a celebrated, and justly celebrated, pastry-cook's shop. Now, the shop was full of men who

preferred pastry to preaching, and who were cooling the ardour excited by overnight stimulants and breakfast devilries, and a June sun, with a series of fresh fruit-ices.

"What a quiz!" said one.

"*Quis est?*" inquired another.

"The Pope of Rome, for a penny," said a third.

"I'll bet two to one he's a cardinal; twig his red hat," said a fourth.

"I'll take it," said a fifth; "he's something military, in a new regulation-hat."

Several other characters were named, and bets booked to a considerable amount upon the Squire's being somebody or other; but the heaviest were in favour of his being a foreign ambassador, or the leader of the quadrille band, come down from London to play at the Star ball.

"Here, Horse-Leech," cried one of the young men. "Come here a minute, if you can leave off flirting with Betsy, and just give us your notion of who and what that very queer character is in the coach."

"He's the pope."

"He's a cardinal."

"He's a foreign count."

"Only a musician—a mere fiddler."

"For another pony — I name him—He's the ambassador from the Red Sea."

"Who is he, Leech?" said all, at once.

"He is my governor," said Horatio; "but why he has been metamorphosing himself in that very extraordinary way I cannot conceive."

"Is he a deputy-lieutenant for Northamptonshire?" asked one man.

"Certainly," replied Horace.

"Then rely upon it that is the new dress for the character, and I win three ponies, for it's military."

The Squire, who had been abusing the driver for not getting on, suddenly found himself the centre of attraction to a large crowd, and, recollecting the queerness of his appearance, popped back into his corner, and endeavoured to hide himself by pulling up the glasses. It was too late, however; a rumour had pervaded the multitude that the

chariot contained some great man, and every one was resolved to have a peep at him.

When the chariot moved on, which it did as soon as Horatio had jumped upon the box and bidden the driver turn round and go by Oriel Lane, and so through Blue Boar Lane, to the lodgings in St. Aldate's, a large crowd followed it which grew gradually larger; and, when the Squire alighted and rushed up to his rooms, he was saluted by loud cries of "Window! window! show yourself at the window," which, of course, he would not do; and so the house was closely beset for the rest of the day, although Horatio explained to some of the people that the occupier of the bootmaker's lodgings was only a country gentleman who had met with an accident which had discoloured his dress.

The Squire would have been very angry, but his wrath was appeased by the thought that his annoyances had been caused in the pursuits of science, and in the presence of the greatest natural philosopher of the age.

END OF VOL. I.

Frederick Shoberl, Junior, Printer to His Royal Highness
51, Rupert Street, Haymarket, London.

GREAT TOM OF OXFORD.

VOL. II.

GREAT TOM

OF

OXFORD.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"PETER PRIGGINS," &c.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON:

HENRY COLBURN, PUBLISHER,

GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET.

1846.

Frederick Shoberl, Junior, Printer to His Royal Highness Prince Albert,
51, Rupert Street, Haymarket, London.

GREAT TOM OF OXFORD.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE COMMEMORATION—CONCLUDED.

We must leave the Squire to change his dress, and procure another broad-brimmed beaver, while we return to the agriculturists, Uncle Tom and Cicero. They were quite wearied out by walking over the model-farm under a strong June sun, and sauntered back slowly to Oxford. Cicero, having a friend or two at Maudlen, called upon them, in order to introduce his uncle to the very excellent tap of beer in the buttery, which, after so long a walk on so hot a day, proved very agreeable. What was to be done until dinner-time? "Go and look at the horses in the different stables," suggested Uncle Tom.

Cicero assured him that the attempt would be unsuccessful; as, though they should find the stables, they should not find the horses, which would be sure to be engaged in carrying men, in attendance on their strangers, to Blenheim, Nuneham, and other spots, which are always visited at Commemoration-time.

"Well; what do you say to a row on the water?" inquired Uncle Tom.

"Do you pull?" asked Cicero.

Uncle Tom "never had pulled, but he would try his best."

Cicero begged to decline; he had rather not be laughed at, as he certainly would have been had he been seen by anybody, being skiffed by an elderly gentleman who would catch crabs every other stroke; and as for pulling the same elderly gentleman down to Iffley in a broiling sun, it was much too good a thing to be attempted.

His Maudlen friend said that he was going to the morning concert at the theatre, and advised Cicero and his uncle to join him.

Neither Uncle Tom nor Cicero had ears for music; but, as there was really nothing else

to be done, and they were sure of seeing the lionesses, they agreed to go, for it was an undress concert, and they could leave the theatre whenever they felt tired.

When they arrived at the theatre, it was already nearly filled, and with difficulty they got seats at last in the undergraduate's gallery, which corresponds with the one-shilling gallery at other theatres, being quite as highly placed, but a little more respectable, and by far the best spot for hearing the music, and commanding a view of the company.

They had not been seated many minutes, and the overture had but just commenced, when a gentleman in fierce red whiskers entered the gallery, having on his arm a lady with a highly-freckled face, gracefully and partially shaded with ringlets of a deep red-tiled hue. They found their way to the only vacant seats, which brought the lady in juxta-position with Uncle Tom, on his right hand side. He threw the unfortunate eye over his right shoulder, just took a glimpse—a shud-dering glimpse at his neighbour—and then, as he foolishly believed, fixed it upon the

orchestra. He had, in reality, no control over the muscles of that optic, and the lady, believing it to be firmly fixed upon her, first of all smiled, simpered, and bowed repeatedly, then grew very red, and looked very angry, and at last appealed to the gentleman who sat by her side—who, looking very hard at Uncle Tom, said, "By the powers! only jist let him continue that same!"

"I say, uncle," whispered Cicero, "you are in luck; don't you know the lady who is sitting next to you?"

"I really had much rather not," said Uncle Tom. "Change places, will you?"

"No, no; sit still. I am sure that is the very lady who bowed to you on Headington Hill; and if you don't or won't know her, she evidently does or will know you. She is bowing at you as hard as she can, and, by Jove, blushing too. Come, come, uncle, acknowledge her as an early flame."

"Never saw her in my life, upon my honour and word, and never wish to see her again," said Uncle Tom. "Pheugh!—how hot it is!—let us go out."

"Nonsense!—Now we are here, uncle, let us hear a shilling's worth or two, out of our half-sovereigns," said Cicero.

"I would rather pay a ten-pound note than be where I am.—Pheugh!—it is positively unbearable," said Uncle Tom, standing up and snorting with heat and annoyance.

"Down in front!—down!—hush!—silence!—down!—sit down!" said several voices.

Uncle Tom felt inclined to be quarrelsome, and resist the order; but Cicero, by a gentle haul on the tails of his coat, brought him down to his seat.

He had not sat many minutes, with his eyes, as he thought, firmly fixed upon a syren, who was warbling forth an Italian bravura, when he felt the lady next to him rise from her seat. He just cast a glance at her, and found she was looking exceedingly red and angry, and exchanged seats with her companion.

He felt much relieved, and thought that the thermometer must have sunk at least an inch. He was so much cooler, that he doubled his arms over his chest, and

began to enjoy the music and the scene around him.

He had not sat very long, however, when he felt his left hand, which was under his right arm, touched with something which felt like pasteboard, and a voice whispered in his ear, "I'll trouble you for yours."

"My what?" said Uncle Tom, looking round.

"Whist! the lady, my sister, will hear, and spoil sport. Just rade my card, and favour me with a rade of yours in return," whispered the stranger.

Uncle Tom, very much surprised at, and unable to account for, so strange a proceeding, looked at the card in his hand and read "Lieutenant O'Brady, Brady Castle, Cove of Cork," and below the engraving, in pencil-writing, "Mitre Inn, High Street."

"I'll be hanged if the fellow ain't mad!" said Uncle Tom, throwing the card upon the ground, and scrambling through the company, over the back seats, bidding Cicero follow him, amidst loud cries of "Silence! silence!" and a distinct whisper from the

gentleman in fiery whiskers, "We'll contrive to meet again any how."

As soon as Uncle Tom had arrived at the top of the staircase, he rushed down the steps, and did not stop until he found himself in the centre of the Schools' Quadrangle. Cicero hurried after him as quickly as he could, and demanded the reason of his quitting the concert in so hasty a manner.

Uncle Tom could only say that he did not choose to sit next to a madman, who had taken some extraordinary antipathy to him, and wished to provoke him to fight a duel.

"What did he say, then?" asked Cicero.

"Oh, something about the lady his sister, and then begged me to *rade* his card, and favour him with a *rade* of mine in return," said Uncle Tom.

"Rely upon it," said Cicero, "the lady is an old flame of yours, and wishes to renew the acquaintance. What did you do or say to her to make her change her seat, eh?"

"I neither spoke to, looked at, nor touched her," said Uncle Tom. "Rely upon it, Lieu-

tenant O'Brady of Brady Castle is mad, and the madness runs in the family."

"Where does he put up? You really ought to call on the lady," said Cicero.

"I'll be hanged if I do! so say no more about it; and as for Mr. O'Brady—I'll wring his red nose out of his ugly face if he dares to speak to me again. So say no more about it, I repeat, unless you wish to offend me," said Uncle Tom, looking so seriously angry that Cicero saw it would not do to carry the joke any farther.

They walked slowly down the Turl into the High Street, which looked, as it was, deserted, and sought their lodgings, where they found the Squire ready dressed for dinner, but dabbing his face, which looked very much inflamed, with a damp towel. The fact was, the fumes or steams of the acids which had discharged, or rather commuted, the colour of his clothes, had also affected his skin, upon which they acted as a caustic, and caused a very unpleasant sensation of burning. He bore it as philosophically as a philosopher could do with the thermometer at 85° in the

shade, until Horatio explained the cause of his misfortune, and exhibited the damaged articles of dress. Then Uncle Tom and Cicero laughed so immoderately that Horatio was forced to join them long before he had completed the story of the ride home from the Professor's in the Star chariot.

The Squire grew very angry, and might possibly have quarrelled with his brother and his sons, had not Cicero amused him, and driven away his anger by relating the adventure of Uncle Tom with the Irish gentleman, whom he would persevere in denominating a lunatic. This turned the tables upon Uncle Tom, and served to amuse the party until the rattling of carriages proclaimed that the concert was over, the visitors of Blenheim and Nuneham returning from their excursions, and, consequently, that dinner-time was approaching.

The table was laid for twenty, but, besides themselves, and the Professor, and the Baron, only five young men came to dinner. It passed off rather heavily, for Uncle Tom was out of humour, and the Squire and his brother philosophers talked too scientifically for the

rest of the party to understand them. Even the hock, good as it was, and well iced, failed to raise the spirits of the younger guests; and when the strong full-bodied port made its appearance, instead of some cool claret, which had been forbidden by the Squire, they first of all looked at one another, then telegraphed in a peculiar way, and finally withdrew from the room, under some paltry excuse or another, congratulating each other on having escaped from the port, and the fever consequent on such fiery fluids.

As the Squire was deep in abstruse subjects with his elder guests, and Uncle Tom did not seem to relish their talk or his wine, the young men proposed to him to go into Christchurch meadow, and see the procession of boats with which the term generally ends. He gave a ready assent, for he was sick of oxygen and hydrogen from the Professor, and long dissertations upon mammalia and other classes of animals, in shocking bad English, from the Baron, mixed with a little twaddle upon everything that he deemed philosophical from the Squire.

The fresh air of the meadows seemed to revive him, and he regretted that they had given a promise to his brother to return early and witness a few interesting experiments from various subjects, for exhibiting which he had brought up his apparatus. Horatio and his brother were enjoined not to be late, and to invite all the young men whom they could find disengaged to view the experiments.

"You will *not*, of course?" said Uncle Tom.

"Of course not: but if I did, rely upon it, none of them would come who were invited. There will be a ball at the Star, after the boats; and, rely upon it, the ball will have more attractions for the men than an electrifying machine, an air-pump, or a magic-lantern," said Horatio.

"Ay, and strong hot port instead of iced champagne, or cold claret," said Cicero.

"Here we are in the meadow," said Horatio. "What a crowd! I'll tell you what we will do. I have got my skiff at Mother Hall's. We will get into her, and row down

to the mouth of the Cherwell, where we shall see everything without being annoyed by the crowd."

After squeezing their way with difficulty, through the thousands who thronged the gravel-walk leading down to the river, they made three of about twenty-five in a punt, and were, wonderful to say, poled across in safety to the spot where the skiff lay. It took Horatio nearly half an hour to wheedle and coax his little boat through the punts and other craft that crowded the river. At length, after many strong remarks from Uncle Tom and Cicero, and some very bad language from the polers of the punts, mingled with threats of throwing them into the river, they forced their way through the last course of punts, and gained the spot where Horatio intended to take up his position, as one most favourable for viewing the procession in comfort and security.

Several other boats had been placed by their owners in the same spot; still there was room for Horatio's skiff alongside a wherry, rowed by a waterman, and having its stern

covered with a nice white awning, edged with scarlet ribands. Slowly and skilfully the skiff was laid alongside, and its chain made fast to the root of an overhanging willow-tree. Uncle Tom and Cicero, after watching with some curiosity the *modus operandi* adopted by Horatio in settling their little bark, turned round in their seats so as to face the river. This manœuvre gave them a full view of the parties who were seated beneath the awning of the wherry by their side. Uncle Tom felt inclined to faint, and Cicero to burst out laughing, when they saw Lieutenant O'Brady, his sister, and the old gentleman who had been seated by her side as the carriage slid down Headington Hill. Yes, there they were, all three, sipping what seemed to be claret, and eating from a dish of delicious-looking Wytham strawberries.

Uncle Tom would have begged Horatio to loose his skiff and move off somewhere else, but it was too late; three four-oared boats and an eight-oared had laid themselves across their stern and hemmed them in. To get on shore was impossible; for the willow

which impended over them grew in such manner from a deep swampy place near the bank, that it was not practical to effect a landing without getting up to one's neck in water and mud.

"By the powers — Florence dear! but that's cool—see there; that's the very same man, with his eye out of the horizontal, that stared at ye so as ye came into the town, and again when ye was in the concert-house," said the lieutenant, pointing with his wine-glass to Uncle Tom, and advancing it so near his nose that he actually sniffed the *bouquet* of the Lafitte.

"Oh! protect me from the creature!" shrieked Florence. "He's looking at me now."

Uncle Tom was doing no such thing. As he thought, he was looking down the river with his good eye, entirely forgetting that the other, over whose muscles, as I have said, he had no command, was, or rather appeared to be, firmly fixed on the fiery locks of the lady in the wherry.

"Terence dear!" said the lady, "ask the gentleman civilly just to look another way."

"Gentleman!" said the brother, eyeing Uncle Tom contemptuously. "You said gentleman by mistake. I'll not ask him anything; but if he don't remove his ugly eye, I'll —"

"What, sir!" said Uncle Tom, jumping up in the little skiff, and causing her and her neighbour the wherry to sway about so, that Uncle Tom, all unused to balance himself in a little boat, was obliged to hang on to the awning of the wherry to steady himself. This gave an additional sway to the wherry, and caused the old gentleman to topple, head over heels, into the stern, the lieutenant to lurch forward, and upset the little table with its contents, fruit, wine, and glasses, and Miss Florence to grasp at the table to save herself from falling upon her brother. To say that this was accompanied by screams and shrieks—so loud as to call the attention of every one near them—is needless. The lieutenant swore most loudly and wickedly; the fair Florence screamed incessantly; and the old gentleman, on his back in the stern, bellowed murder, and groaned by

turns, assuring everybody that he was killed entirely.

Uncle Tom was so frightened at the mischief he had involuntarily caused, that he, in his agitation, held on to the awning, and so increased the sway of both the boats, that he had very nearly upset the little skiff. As it was, she shipped sufficient water to wet him over his ankles, and to make Horatio and Cicero believe that she would fill and go down. They therefore seized Uncle Tom by his coat-tails, and dragged him down upon his seat, where he sat holding on, and looking the hateful lady in the face.

"Oh! Terence dear! that eye again! I cannot bear it. Oh, oh, take me away!—I will faint, I know I will!" screamed Miss Florence O'Brady; and to shut out the dreaded vision she covered her eyes with her handkerchief, quite ignorant of the fact that it held in its folds the contents of the dish of strawberries. In her convulsive efforts to rid herself of the sight of Uncle Tom's offensive eye, she gave the cambric so hard a squeeze that the ripe fruit was smashed to a pulp,

and the juice ran through all over her face, hands, and silk dress; and when she removed the handkerchief to see if the evil eye was still upon her, she presented such a frightful appearance that Uncle Tom shuddered, and Horatio and Cicero burst out into a loud laugh, in which they were joined by every one of the crowd who could see the cause of it.

"Just wait till I resate my venerable uncle," said the lieutenant, hauling at the arms of the aged individual who was so awkwardly jammed-in that he would not have regained his seat had it not been for the help of Cicero, who stepped into the wherry and assisted in restoring him to his perpendicular.

"Thank ye for that same, young gentleman!" said Mr. Terence O'Brady. "And now stand aside, for I don't wish to harm *you*—but here's for the old boy, at any rate!"

So saying, he took up a claret bottle by the neck, and hurled it at Uncle Tom's head, saying, "Take that!" Cicero caught his arm just in time to divert the course of the bottle, which came in full force upon the ex-

pansive chest of Joe Barnes, the waterman, who had hitherto been sitting in the bow of the wherry grinning at the fun. He fell under the blow, and lay as if his breath had been beaten out of his body.

Horatio and Uncle Tom sprung into the wherry to help Cicero, who was wrestling with the lieutenant, and trying to prevent him from seizing another bottle, which lay conveniently within his reach. In the scramble that ensued, Uncle Tom felt a powerful pair of arms round his neck, and, upon looking round to see who his assailant was, he saw the strawberry-tinted face and the red ringlets of Miss Florence within an inch of his nose. He shuddered, he groaned, he entreated of her to release him, but she would not. "She knew he meant to murther Terence dear, and she'd prevent it;" so, clinging tighter and tighter to him, she fairly brought him down upon the seat by her side, and there held him firmly, but convulsively. The old gentleman, who had hitherto taken no part in the affray, seeing Uncle Tom's head exposed—for his hat had

fallen overboard in the struggle—seized a dessert-dish in both his hands, and gave him so severe a blow upon his bald pate that the china was broken into fragments, and a hollow groan escaped from the recipient of the blow as he fell into the bottom of the wherry.

Miss Florence cast one glance upon the man towards whom she had formed so great and unaccountable an antipathy; and when she saw the blood trickling in small streams from his glossy pericranium, uttered a howl—a specimen of her country's powers in wailing—and sunk down in a swoon by Uncle Tom's side.

To describe the scene that ensued is impossible: suffice it to say, that Joe Barnes seized Uncle Tom's hat, which was full of water, threw the contents over the lady's face, and brought her to herself. He then took his handkerchief, and, having wetted it, wiped the blood off Uncle Tom's head, who sat upright, looking quite bewildered, and begging to know what was the matter. The old gentleman, who thought he had

murdered the other old gentleman, was making ten thousand apologies, some in English, but the greater number in Irish; and the lieutenant—"Terence dear!"—was standing looking on, nearly choked by the knuckles of Horatio and Cicero, who held him tightly grasped by his neckcloth. The bystanders and sitters were shouting "Shame! shame! Go it! At him again!" and such other cries as their different ideas of the struggle before them suggested, when a cry of "The boats! the boats! Here they come!" withdrew their attention from the combatants.

A stormy explanation ensued, in which it appeared that the O'Bradys, on their first visit to England, had resolved to see the sights at Oxford during the Commemoration; that Miss Florence, in descending Headington Hill, had fancied that Uncle Tom, who was, without knowing or meaning it, staring very hard at her, was an old friend, whom she ought to recognize; that afterwards, at the concert, finding him a perfect stranger, and not the man she had taken him for, she believed that his continuing to gaze at her in a

peculiar manner over his right shoulder was meant purposely to insult her. — *Hinc illæ lacrymæ.*

The matter was satisfactorily explained, apologies given and received, and the belligerents might have passed a quiet hour together over the claret that still remained basketed, had not Miss Florence O'Brady, in order perhaps to atone for her former unkind thoughts of Uncle Tom, shown such tender ways towards him as alarmed him, and made him urge his nephews to an immediate departure.

Joe Barnes put them on shore in the meadow; and, while the crowd on the banks were shouting loudly in honour of the procession which was approaching the barge, Uncle Tom, with his wet hat over his still-bleeding head, hurried into "our house," to recount his woes to his brother and the natural philosophers.

Alas! instead of finding the Baron, the professor of chemistry, and Leech *père*, over their wine, or getting the apparatus in order to astonish the young men with certain expe-

riments, they found the Baron and the l
fessor absent, and the Squire walking a
the room in an unhappy and most agit
state of mind and body. The box in w
the apparatus had travelled was not even
covered, and the nice, clean table-cloth,
was to have been nailed to the walls to
a surface for the reception of the figur
the magic lantern and microscope, was
even unfolded.

"Where is the Baron Von Inkstandhaus
asked Horatio.

"And your old college friend, Dr. I
phorus?" inquired Cicero.

"Where are the natural philosoph
said Uncle Tom.

"*Abierunt, eruperunt, evaserunt*—go
—quitted. We have had a quarrel."

"So have I, rather than not," said U
Tom, taking off his wet beaver and displ
his abraded skull to his astonished bre
"But it is all right now; only that
fiend, the *she*-one, I mean, was a litt
loving—curse her!"

"What have *you* quarrelled about?"

the young men of their father, after they had explained their own adventures to him.

"Oh! on a mere trifle. That infernal Baron, after drinking nearly three bottles of port, would assert, and that brute Phosphorus backed him in it, that light was a material substance, and could be weighed like anything else. I denied the fact, and then we got to high words; and I called Phosphorus a fool and the Baron a ——, hang me if I recollect what!—but they both went off, and I believe not quite sober — but, however, I say nothing, only may I be blown up again in Phosphorus's laboratory if I stay in Oxford to see that German brute dishonour the University by being presented with an honorary degree! No — I'll leave Oxford this very night, or at any rate early next morning."

Uncle Tom readily agreed to the arrangement, as he thought it better to get out of the way of the fair Florence O'Brady, lest, in her zeal to recompense him for her ungenerous allusions to his defective eye, she might propose to marry him.

So Squire Leech and he departed for Colyton Grange early on the ensuing morning, without waiting to see the Commemoration concluded.

CHAPTER IX.

THE BRACE OF BIRDS.

See! on the one hand, death,
Or disappointed hopes;
The other, punishment,
Disgrace! I needs must choose.
How to choose? I know not.
Old Play.

"There," said Tom; "now you know what 'a commemoration' means."

"Oh, yes; a sort of universal university frolic," said I.

"That's true; but don't tell the Vice-Chancellor or the Dean that you think so. You may tell me anything, for I never *split*—'sound as a bell,' you know. Now, lie quite quiet, and I will tell you some sporting stories—never mind how I learnt them. I hear and see a great deal more than people give me credit for. I *could* repeat many interesting

tales that I have heard up here; but here goes for 'the Brace of Birds.' "

There is, you must allow, something very interesting, nay, cheering, to an old sportsman on the approach of "the first." This term, "the first," is as clearly understood by every one, *qui sulphurea sustinet arma*, to mean the 1st of September, as the term "the Duke" is understood by every one to mean the hero of Waterloo. Hercules *ille*, *the* day—*the* man. The little prefix *the* stamps the man and day with an unwithering celebrity. We might philosophize prolongedly on the advantages accruing to every one to whom the prefix is assigned, from the hero to the favourite *danseuse* of the season; but we will not—we will merely say that we have no doubt in our minds that Shakspeare wrote,

"We thank *the* Jew for teaching us that word,"

and not "*thee*, Jew," knowing, as he must have done, presciently, that when once his play was read or acted, no other Jew than Shylock could be dreamed of as *the* Jew, from his time down to the days of *a* Jew who figures in the pages of the cleverest novel of this day.

But a truce to philosophizing. Let us "hye on" to our little tale.

Close to the borders of a large preserve, in the game-breeding county of Norfolk, stood a small farm-house, with its snug convenient homestead. It was occupied by a new tenant, a respectable young man who had managed to save a sufficient sum from his wages, as a bailiff or looker, to justify him in taking a farm of sixty acres by the year, and a young buxom lass of twenty summers as a wife, on a lease for the life of one of them; what, I believe, the lawyers term a "lease of survivorship."

Arnold Dingly was bound in his agreement not to destroy, or permit to be destroyed, a single head of game on his lands, nor to use, or permit to be used, any gun, snare, net, or any other engine for the capture or destruction of a single rabbit. They, the rabbits, were the perquisites of the head-keeper, who, although he was ordered to "keep them down," took care that sufficient should be left undestroyed to produce him a pretty little addition to his income.

Sampson Sharman, the head-keeper of Erdleigh manor, was jealous of his rights and privileges, and did not fail to let the tenants know that any encroachments on them would be visited with the severest punishment which the law allowed. As he had nearly a dozen men under him, upon whom he could call at any hour, to assist him in capturing, and, if necessary, attacking poachers, all the tenants upon the manor were subjected to a system of *espionnage*, as effective as it was annoying; and, so favourable was the light loamy soil of Erdleigh manor to the increase of that anti-malthusian vermin, the rabbit, that no one could keep a bit of parsley or a bunch of pinks in his garden. Even the tops of the carrots and parsnips disappeared long before their roots grew to maturity. It was very vexatious to the tenants, but what did Sampson care for that? every pair of rabbits with their skins on was worth twelve pence to him in the London market.

When the Dingleys came into the warren farm, it was just as the crops had been cleared off the land, about Old Michaelmas; and both

Arnold and his wife were quite delighted at seeing the pheasants and hares coming in troops out of the neighbouring coverts, and strutting and titupping about before their very doors as tame as their own poultry; the partridges, too, would sun themselves in the ash-heap in the yard, as coolly as if nobody ever meant to make game of them.

When, however, the young wheats and tares began to appear, and, shortly after, disappear under the ravages of the pretty pheasants and innocent hares, Arnold's face grew daily longer and longer, and he began to think that his farm was not so desirable a one, or so cheaply rented, as he had fancied it to be when he took it. He complained to the keeper, who merely smiled grimly, and told him that his orders were to "keep up the game," and that he should obey them. The bailiff "had nothing whatever to do with the game;" and when Arnold laid the case before his landlord, Mr. Oldstyle, one of the members for an adjoining borough, he was kindly assured, over a most excellent luncheon in the steward's room, that the notion of game

injuring a farm was all a mistake; that it was better to have the young wheats eaten off lest they should grow too *frum* and "run to riband;" and that, in case any damage should accrue, due compensation would be allowed when he came to pay his rent.

With this explanation and promise, given in a bland, nay, a kind, manner, Arnold was contented; and, when a troop of gunners arrived from town and country for a *battue*—that unsportsmanlike slaughter of the innocents—and he heard some two thousand shots fired, his mind was quite easy; but when he saw in the country papers that, at the *battue* at Erdleigh Manor, the well-stocked preserves of Squire Oldstyle had afforded their well-known superior sport, and that 800 pheasants, 500 hares and rabbits, 200 brace of birds, and 1 woodcock had been killed in two days, he was really afraid that the game would be extirpated, and his landlord deprived of future sport (?).

But Arnold Dingly did not know the game-breeding qualities of Norfolk, nor the game-preserving abilities of the Norfolk keepers.

He had never examined the statistics of the county to ascertain how many of its rural population passed a few months yearly in its gaol for offences against the game-laws, nor how many perished in conflicts with keepers, nor how many keepers were foully murdered in the execution of their duties. He had not the least notion how many beer-shops had been opened in snug, out-of-the-way places since the passing of *the* act, which were supported entirely by those whose ignorance was so great of the nature of *meum* and *tuum*, that they could not be persuaded that game was not mere "wild animals," and their own property, if they could shoot, net, suffocate, or entrap it. Arnold Dingly knew none of these facts, although they had been laid upon the table of the House at the request of some Honourable Member, printed in folio blue books, and even sold as waste paper to the butter-shops. But, says some Honourable Member, "He ought to have known it—the *returns* moved for were printed, published, and circulated." Alas! the only *returns* that

Arnold knew anything about were those which he put into his vespertinal pipe, and which, like the Honourable Member's returns, ended in smoke.

Arnold Dingly was too poor a man, and, as a mere cultivator of sixty acres, too insignificant an individual to associate with the large and wealthy farmers around him. He could not afford to spend two shillings for dinner, and five shillings for a bottle of wine after it, at the market ordinary on market-days, so that he had no opportunity of learning from his brethren of the plough and harrow their opinions of the "chances of the game" doing him great or little injury, and at the one agricultural meeting which he attended nothing was said about the game except by one gentleman, an exchanger of game for fish and venison with a London poulterer, who "looked upon the licensed sale of game as a great boon and preventive of poaching;" and another, who said, "that he had ascertained from a most scientific chemist that the *bumbles* of hares and rabbits,

and the *juggings* of partridges, were fully equal in efficacy to the best foreign guano"—*ergo*, game was to be preserved.

Spring came and then summer, and before harvest Arnold Dingly's cornfields were drilled in all directions by the hares in forming themselves meuses. Under every hedge-row, for some two or three yards, not an ear of corn was to be seen—the rabbits had taken care of them. The beans and peas, as soon as they were ripe, were preyed upon by the pheasants and wood-pigeons, and the seed-clover cut but a very sorry appearance. He heartily wished he had taken a farm far away from a preserve, but he bottled up and recorked the sigh that rose from the recesses—the cellar—of his bosom, when he thought of the promise made him that he should be fully compensated for his losses when his rent became due, though he had some doubts in his mind about the manner in which his losses were to be justly appraised. About the middle of August the crop was cut and gathered, and the little homestead, or rick-barton, certainly gave no outward signs of the good farming of

its tenant by the number and size of its stacks.

It happened that, when harvest was over, about two days before "the first," business called Arnold to a distant town. As his wife, for family reasons, was not in a state to bear the joltings of a market-cart as his companion, he saddled one of his Suffolk punches, a steady old waggon-horse, and set out by himself. The sale by auction which he went to attend, as a purchaser of a few implements, was not over until late. The sun had set when he mounted his nag; and as he had about fifteen miles to travel on a slow heavy beast, he did not stop to take any refreshment, but made up his mind to recruit himself and rest his nag at a small, retired alehouse which he had observed as he passed it in the morning.

He jogged on, but not merrily, for his purchases had nearly exhausted his little store, sadly reduced before by the payment of harvest-work. Still he jogged on, and, getting hungry in spite of sad thoughts, wished that the alehouse might present itself to his eyes

at every turning of the road. At length he came to the common, at the further side of which, under a wide and lofty covert, he remembered it stood. It was then dark. There was no moon to "give her light in the heavens that night," and a heavy dew spread itself over the lowlands, and hung suspended among the trees and hedge-rows. Arnold quitted the hard road for the turf by its side, thinking it would be softer and pleasanter for his horse's feet. Thus he approached "The Horse Shoes" in silence, and was about to dismount to enter its doors, after tying his nag to the water-trough, when the sound of voices as of some quarrelling, and others in boisterous merriment, reached his ears.

Arnold kept his seat and listened. He was not afraid of being robbed, for he had paid away nearly all his money at the auction; he was not afraid of being beaten, for he was powerful and possessed of great courage: but he thought he might be insulted if he appeared suddenly among a set of men who had evidently been drinking, and rendered quarrelsome by their drink.

He heard sundry snatches of song; but, as several chose to sing their own songs on their own account at the same time, the jingling of tunes and words was any thing but harmonious. At last, a voice, louder than the rest, struck up an old and well-known poaching song, and every other voice suddenly chimed in with

> It's my delight on a shiny night,
> In the season of the year.

Hungry and thirsty as he was, Arnold was upon the point of pulling his horse's head from the trough out of which it had been drinking, and moving on; but at the moment one of the shutters of the drinking-room was thrown open, as if to give the inmates a little fresh air; and he could not help listening to the conversation that followed the shouts and rappings on the table with which the ditty was applauded.

"That's the music for me," said one.

"D—n the music! the words is what I approves on—it's the very sentimunt of the thing," said another, letting his fist fall heavily on the table.

"I'll give you a t-t-oast," said a third, in the stammering tones of drunkenness. "Here's confusion to all keepers, and may their guns bust to p-p-ieces every time they lets'm off!"

"Bravo!—hurrah!" shouted all.

"And I'll give you another toast, my boys," cried a fourth. "Here's a short gun, a stout cudgel, and a strong arm; and may all the squires and their keepers be —— —— ——" The terms of the toast are too horrible to be written.

Arnold's blood turned cold as he heard the joyous shout with which this toast was received.

"But to business," said one of the previous speakers. "Are all the baskets packed ready for Jem Waggoner? he will soon be here."

"All ready — sixty brace safely stowed away and covered with eggs and straw," replied another.

"How much a brace are we to pouch this season?" asked a deep, gruff-speaking fellow.

"Only a shilling," said the first speaker, "and garnish out of that for the landlord here; but we must be satisfied; as, thanks

to that d—d sale of game bill, every d—d gentleman sells his game and spoils our market. It was not so in former times; squires were too proud to turn poulterers."

"And they are stricter and harsher than ever, now, with a poor fellow who tries to turn an honest penny by catching a partridge or a hare. They find they can make a profit of it themselves, instead of giving it away to their friends and tenants," said another.

"Well, here's b—t all gentlemen poulterers!" said the first voice, which elicited another shout, and fresh calls for "jugs round."

"Where do we meet to-morrow night?" asked the man of business.

"It's Squire Oldstyle's turn next. If we could only get that sober muff, Dingly, to make one of us, we could make a fortune off the warren, it lies so snug and handy."

"Let's try him — he's eat up with the game."

"It's of no use at present; let us wait and see how he looks when he comes to pay his rent, and finds twenty or thirty *bobs* returned

to him for damage done to twenty or thirty pounds' worth of corn. Ah! ah! ah! He'll come over to us some day and *take* his own; as it is but fair he should do."

"'Ware hawk! at the Squire's," said the man of business; "that Sampson Sharman's a devil incarnate, and would no more mind shooting a poor fellow than he would a pheasant. Curse him! he'll rue it one day."

"I believe him to be a poacher himself; the coachman and he hain't so thick as they be for nothing."

Arnold Dingly had heard enough to convince him of the characters of the men who were enjoying themselves in the little parlour of the Horse Shoes. He quietly removed himself and his horse from the neighbourhood of the public-house, and trotted on towards his home.

About midway from the place he had just left and the warren farm was another house, not a Tom and Jerry, as a mere beer-shop is called, but a regular magisterially-licensed public. There — for coaches still ran in that

part of England—did the two day coaches and the mail pull up to change horses.

At this house Arnold did not mean to stop, hungry as he was, for it was not so very far from his own as to justify him in doing so; but, just before he reached it, his horse cast one of his fore-shoes, and, as the blacksmith's shop was at hand, he dismounted, gave him to the ostler to get him shod, and entered the bar-parlour. It was now quite dark without, and candles were lighted within: two or three persons were in the parlour taking refreshment, previously to the arrival of the up-mail, in which they hoped to obtain places. Arnold sat down and helped himself to some of the dishes before him, and then retired to the larger room in front to enjoy one pipe and a tankard, while his nag's shoe was being fitted. The room was nearly empty; and as the night was warm, he seated himself near an open window which commanded a view of the stables, and of that part of the house opposite to which the coaches drew up to change horses. The space was lighted by a

large oil-lamp suspended to the signpost, and by another over the entrance-door.

Where Arnold Dingly sat he could see, but not be seen by those without. He fancied he saw one of the stable-doors cautiously opened, now and then, when the sound of wheels was heard, as if by some one who was listening for the mail. It was not the ostler; for he was visible at the door of the smithy, watching the shoeing of the nag. It was not the helper; for he was lounging against the signpost, flicking an imaginary horse with an imaginary four-horse whip, and whistling and cherruping to a team which he fancied he was driving. It did not much matter to Arnold who it was; but the stealthy motions of the man excited his curiosity, and he could not help watching him.

At length a horn was heard—that plain tin instrument, which, like the harp on Tara's walls, now "hangs mute," and is superseded by a steam-whistle — and, in all the glory of former days, the mail was pulled up at the door by its *crack* driver, who threw the reins on the backs of his steaming and tail-shaking

wheelers, chucked his whip to the helper, and dismounted from his box.

At this moment Arnold saw the man, who had excited his curiosity by his stealthy movements, come out of the stable with a large basket. It was evidently heavy-laden, for it was with some difficulty that the guard could lift it upon the roof of the coach. When he had done so, he threw a cloth over it, jumped from the coach, and shook the man, who had given the basket to him, heartily by the hand. After whispering together a short time, the guard left the man, saying, "Wait half a second until I've made up the way-bill, and I will bring it out to you."

In a few minutes he came out again, followed by the maid, who was carrying some hot mixture in her hand. Arnold saw the guard count some money into the stranger's hand, and heard a remonstrance that "it ought to have been more," and a reply that "the times wouldn't afford it." Then the glass, of whatever it was, was taken from the maid. The guard took a fair share of it, and

handed it to the other. As this individual raised his head to drain the glass, the light of the lamp fell upon his face, and disclosed to Arnold the features of Sampson Sharman, the keeper, which had been hidden by the brim of a large straw hat. Arnold recollected the observation he had heard at the Horse Shoes, and felt convinced that the basket just put upon the mail contained a liberal supply of game for the London market. He knew it did not hold rabbits, for they were sent up openly three days a week by the road-waggon. Sampson, too, was disguised in a straw hat and a round or smock-frock, and evidently did not wish to be known. However, it was no business of Arnold's, so he left the window, paid his reckoning, and went out to seek his nag, which had been shod and put into the stable.

Arnold's nag was a quiet nag enough; but, just as he was brought out of the stable, the guard gave a flourish on his horn to warn the driver and passengers that his time was up. Unused to music, or disliking it, the old horse backed; and, after a loud terrified neigh or

two, commenced kicking out behind; and, in one of its flings, struck Sampson Sharman on the leg as he was crossing from the coach towards the stable where he had previously been concealed. He muttered "curses, not loud but deep," against the brute that had hurt him, and tried to limp into the stable; but, before he could reach it he fell, and Arnold feared his leg was broken. The mail drove off at the moment, and Arnold shouted for help. The ostler and helper came up with their lanterns, and Arnold told them to take up Mr. Sharman, the keeper of Erdleigh Manor, and carry him in-doors, while he rode for a doctor.

"Curse the doctor, and the horse, and you too!" groaned out Sampson; "leave me alone: I shall be right in a few minutes."

"It is I, sir, Arnold Dingly, of the Warren; shall I borrow a cart, put the old horse in, and drive you home?"

"No, no—thank you—no," said Sampson rising. "The pain is going off now—I can get home very well; and, mark you — say

nothing about this little accident, nor any thing else you may have seen or heard."

"The basket and the sovereigns — eh?" whispered Arnold; "but I never interfere in such matters."

Sampson muttered something, but Arnold got upon his now quiet nag and rode off. As he passed a gateway, about a hundred yards from the inn, his nag began neighing, and was answered by another horse. Arnold pulled up, and rode to the spot whence the sound came, and saw a pony and cart fastened to a gate by the pony's bridle. He rode on, however; and, just as he reached the turning of the road which led to the keeper's house, the cart passed him, and a voice which he knew to be Sampson's urged the pony to its full speed as it turned the corner.

"Good night," shouted Arnold, who was riding on the turf under the shade of the hedge-row which skirted the road.

The cart was instantly stopped, and Sampson called out to Dingly, who rode up to its side.

"I was looking out for you, Mr. Dingly,"

said Sampson, "but missed you in the dark, and concluded you were on further forward. You said something about baskets and sovereigns: now, for fear of mistakes, I beg you to know that the basket only contained poultry and eggs, and that they were my own property, that I had a right to dispose of as I pleased."

"Well, well," said Dingly, "it's no business of mine, and I shall not say any thing about it. I'm no spoil-game, I assure you. Good night."

Arnold laughed and rode on, not knowing that he had made an enemy, and one not likely to forget and forgive.

Michaelmas came, and the rent-day with it. The Squire was at a distant manor, shooting, and the lawyer presided to receive the rents and entertain the tenants afterwards. When it came to Dingly's turn to be admitted into the justice-room, he laid his money on the table; and when Mr. Sharpe, the lawyer, had counted it and pronounced it perfectly right, he demanded the compensation for the loss

caused by the game which had been promised him.

"Oh! certainly, Mr. Dingly, certainly; we are very liberal in those matters. We allow £5 per centum for damage done to crops. Your rent is £90—30s. per acre, and here are £4 10s. which you will find exactly right," said Mr. Sharpe, placing four sovereigns and a half before the astonished tenant.

"But, sir, I assure you this will not be a fourth of what I have lost—indeed £40 would not compensate me fully—you have not a notion—"

"Oh yes, I have," said Sharpe, nodding very knowingly, "oh yes, I have—that if you are discontented at receiving the same as all the other tenants, you can quit your farm as soon as you please. We shall have plenty of applicants, I assure you."

"But, sir, Mr. Oldstyle told me that I should not be a loser of a penny, and if you will only let any of my neighbours survey my farm and put an estimate on my losses, you will find—"

"We do nothing of the sort, sir: we go upon principle, and consider five per cent. a sufficient remuneration," said Mr. Sharpe, frowning. "If Mr. Oldstyle was at home, I am sure he would act upon my advice, so good morning, Dingly; take up your compensation-money and your receipt, and send in some one else—Good morning."

"I'll write to the Squire," said Arnold, "and see what he says about it. He is called an honourable man, and if he is so he will keep his word."

"A mere waste of time, pen, ink, and paper, rely upon it; be advised, and say no more about it, or you may have notice to quit instead of further compensation. Good morning, Dingly; we shall see you at dinner, of course."

Arnold Dingly was vexed at his disappointment, but more so at the lawyer's coolness, who waved him out of the room with a flourish of his pen. He would not stay to dinner, but walked off home, and, while his indignation was hot upon him, wrote a strong letter to his landlord, and posted

it himself. In two days he received a very short answer, referring him to Lawyer Sharpe for redress, who "took all the trouble in such matters off Mr. Oldstyle's hands."

Arnold had a great mind to throw up his farm immediately, but he could not. What was he to do? Where was he to go if he did? Besides these difficulties, he knew the immense sacrifice he must make if he sold off his stock and implements by auction, and had his sown lands valued. There was another serious *hitch*. Mrs. Dingly was upon the point of being confined, and was very unwell and incapable of moving from her room. So Arnold determined to continue a tenant and to talk to his landlord as soon as he should return home. He took especial care not to mention his vexation, or the cause of it, to his wife, for fear it should harass her and deprive him of his warmest hope—a child, as a pledge of the affection that he believed she entertained for him.

"Dingly," said the parish doctor, who was engaged to attend on Mrs. Dingly in her confinement, "your wife is really ill, but I

am not afraid of the result. She must have any little thing she fancies, however expensive it may be. It will not be long that you will have to indulge her fancies, and you are too good a fellow to deny her any thing. Medicines are of no use to her, and I should only be cheating you if I drenched her with drugs. Let her have what she fancies, get the nurse in the house, and send for me as soon as she says I am wanted."

Off rode the honest apothecary, and Arnold sought his wife's chamber to find out what little dainty would tempt her appetite.

"There is only one thing, dear Arnold, that I seem to wish for," said his wife.

"Say the word, Jane, and if it is gold you can eat, you shall have it."

"Oh, no!—it is nothing very expensive, nor difficult to be obtained: it is only a brace of birds. I should enjoy a roasted partridge, above all things."

Arnold kissed his wife, and promised she should have a brace of birds for dinner the next day. He walked over to the keeper's, and asked him to give him a brace; tel-

ling him the purpose for which he wanted them.

Sampson Sharman told him that his orders were that not a bird should be killed until his master returned at the end of October.

Arnold thought of the basket and the sovereigns, but said nothing. He went to two or three neighbours; but they were not allowed to sport, and could not oblige him. There was no place licensed to sell game in the neighbourhood; but Arnold bethought him of what he had heard at the Horse Shoes, and doubted not, if he managed well, that he could purchase a brace of birds there "on the sly." He remounted his nag, and rode over. It was mid-day, and no one was in the house but the landlady. Arnold made his wishes known to her. She shook her head, and declared she did not know how to help him, for they had been in trouble about game, and had nothing to do with it any longer. Arnold offered her a sovereign for a brace; but she resolutely refused it, declaring it was as much as her life was worth to accept it, without her husband's knowledge. "But,"

said she, "you live at the Warren, don't you? I have heard that you are eaten up with game there."

Arnold told her that he had been a loser of a considerable sum by the damage done to his crops.

"Then you can easily get what you want —a shot will never be noticed, if you only mind what you are about. Be up early, and keep a sharp look-out; then shoot into a covey on the ground."

Arnold smiled at this, his first lesson in poaching, but resolved to try at the inn where the mail stopped before he profited by it. He was as unsuccessful there as he had been at the Horse Shoes, and rode home to tell his wife of his failure in making good his promise. She bade him come to bed and think no more about it; but Arnold saw, in spite of her attempts to conceal it, that she was grievously disappointed.

He rose before it was light, and loaded an old gun that he kept to scare rooks with. He knew that a fine covey of birds, as tame as barn-door fowls, came to feed every morn-

ing in a stubble close to his garden. As soon as it was light enough, he looked over the hedge, and there, sure enough, he saw them feeding. He waited until two of them were close together, put up his gun, and fired. Away flew the rest, leaving two struggling on the ground. He put his gun down, leapt over the hedge, and picked them up, delighted at his success. When he examined the birds, and was putting them into his pockets, a heavy hand was laid upon his shoulder, and a voice, which he knew to be the private property of Sampson Sharman, said—

"Well shot, farmer; this will be a job for Lawyer Sharpe; but I will trouble you for those birds. You know the law authorizes me to take them from you."

"You may inform against me if you please; and I shall have something to say against you—recollect the basket and the sovereigns—but you know why I wanted these birds, and I do not mean to part with them," said Arnold.

"By ——, I'll have them!" said Sampson,

gnashing his teeth, and seizing Arnold by the collar.

"Unhand me, scoundrel! I am willing to pay what the law demands, but I will not be insulted," said Dingly, as he tried to shake himself free. "You will not quit your hold, you malignant fellow? then take that!" and with a blow of his powerful arm he struck Sampson to the ground, with the loss of two very large front teeth.

Sampson rose, spat the blood from his mouth, and, seizing his gun by the barrel, was about to attack the young farmer, when a voice shouted out, "Fair play, keeper, fist to fist."

"Will White! You poaching rascal! what do you do here?" said the keeper.

"Never you mind that—lay down your gun, if you be a man, and have a fair fight—but no using of butt-ends. Stand up, farmer; I'll see fair play."

Sampson, however, declined a fight; and, threatening both his rivals with the vengeance of Lawyer Sharpe, walked off.

Arnold had recognized in Will White's the

voice of the man of business whom he had heard at the Horse Shoes, and was not much pleased at the recognition. He could do no less, however, under the circumstances, than ask him to take some refreshment. He told him the cause of the quarrel with the keeper, and the old poacher only laughed at him, and told him he would be fined, but might soon pay the fine at his landlord's expense if he would follow his advice.

Arnold declined following it; but thanked him for his timely aid, and dismissed him. He said nothing to his wife about what had occurred, but merely told her he had got what she so much wished for. Her eyes sparkled with pleasure; and when the birds were dressed, ate of them so heartily, that Arnold snapped his fingers at the price he should have to pay for them. His wife was confined that very night, bore it very well, and presented him with a chopping boy. The doctor attributed her "excellent time" to the brace of birds.

"What have you to say in answer to this

information?" said Lawyer Sharpe, acting as magistrates' clerk to two "gentlemen poulterers."

Arnold told his tale.

The "gentlemen poulterers" said it was a clear case; and Arnold was fined for destroying two partridges under one Act, and then fined more heavily under another Act for "sporting without a license." He was, however, graciously allowed a fortnight, in which he was to get the money to pay the fines. The surveyor of taxes, too, gave him a hint that he would be surcharged for a certificate.

Sampson Sharman received the thanks of the "gentlemen poulterers" for his vigilance, and was about to retire, grinning vindictively at his victim, when Arnold begged to be allowed to tell something which had come to his knowledge. He was graciously allowed to tell all he had heard and seen at the Coach Inn, and then told to produce his witnesses. He had none to produce. Sampson Sharman said it was all a lie, merely spoken out of revenge; and the "gentlemen poulterers"

told him "he left the court without a stain on his character."

Arnold Dingly left the game-selling justices and Lawyer Sharp with a black speck on his heart. He felt that, although he had done wrong, he had been hardly dealt by. The sneers of the keeper, too, "told upon him." He was not a drinking man; but, upon this occasion, he went into the tap of the inn in which the Petty Sessions were held, and ordered a bumper of brandy and water. He was not alone, for Will White and several others came in to condole with him on the harsh treatment he had met with. When he left the house at ten that night, he was driven home—in a state of intoxication.

When Mrs. Dingly was well enough to come down stairs, and resume the duties of the house, she was surprised to find an alteration in all her husband's habits. He had always some one with him in the day-time, and was out the greater part of the night. She found, too, nets and bits of wire, sticks of sulphur, and other things of which she could not imagine the use. Dingly, too,

was changed, although he was kind to her and the child. He drank more than she had ever known him drink before, and of stronger drinks; neglected his farm, and talked frequently of the tyranny of landlords and the iniquity of the game-laws.

When she expostulated with him, he bade her mind her own business, and not interfere with him. She obeyed him. Without seeming to do so, she watched all his proceedings closely; for she feared something, but she knew not what.

Will White was at the farm almost daily, and often brought two or three men with him, as rough and uncouth as himself. They sat until it was dark, smoking and drinking; and, when they went away, generally took Arnold with them, who did not return home until near daybreak, and generally in a state of intoxication. He seemed, however, in spite of his neglect of business, to have plenty of money; but, instead of giving it to her to put by, as he had hitherto done, he kept it about his person. She was fidgety and uneasy, though she could not tell why. She had an

undefinable feeling that the money was not honestly obtained.

One night, about the close of November, when the nights were intensely dark, her husband left the house about ten o'clock with some half dozen men, whom Will White had brought with him. Some suspicion induced her to watch the party after they left the house; and she saw them, by the lantern which her husband carried under the pretence of lighting them over the brook, go into the cart-stables. When they came out, each had a gun in his hand, and a sack on his arm, and carried something in his hand which looked very much like the nets she had seen about the house of late. She was very much frightened, but did not know how to act. She was fully convinced that her husband had fettered himself to a band of poachers; but, as she knew nothing of his having been prosecuted and fined for having satisfied her wish for game, she could not imagine any cause for the course he was evidently pursuing. She closed the house, and went to bed. She tried to sleep, but could not. She was restless and

miserable. All at once she started at the reports of several guns in the covert adjoining their land. She sprang out of bed, opened the window and listened. Again the guns were heard; then voices in altercation, the baying of dogs, curses, and loud threats, followed by the crashing of boughs. She thrust her body as far as she could out of the window, and heard two shots fired almost at the same moment, succeeded by a shriek so fearful that she closed the casement, kissed her sleeping child, and rushed down stairs to ascertain the cause of what she had heard.

With the speed of a doe she flew across the one field which separated the house from the covert. A spring enabled her to clear the fence; and, directed by the gleams of a dark lantern, she found her way to an open spot in the wood. A crowd of men formed a ring around some object—silent as death. She forced her way through them, and on the greensward she saw Sampson Sharman and her husband lying, shot to death!

It was a dear price to pay for a brace of birds.

CHAPTER X.

THE BATTUE.

——A pull all together.
Ode to the Isis.

In my last tale, "The Brace of Birds," my object was to show, not so much the miseries entailed upon the lower classes and the farmers by the Game Bill itself, as by its adjunct, the Sale-of-Game Bill. My opinion of this adjunct, founded on some years' experience in a tolerably well preserved country, is, that it has led many gentlemen to become poulterers, instead of mere preservers, and to look upon game as a source of revenue rather than of relaxation. The *excessive* preservation of pheasants, partridges, and hares, has been productive of serious losses to farming tenants; and holds out an irresistible lure to the labourer to exchange the handle of the plough, the spade, and the hoe, for the stock

of a gun, and to seek free access to the beer barrel of the public-house by means of a gun-barrel rather than by the fruits of honest labour.

To a fair sprinkling of game, fairly preserved, and a fair day's shooting in fair weather, no fair sportsman can object; but, to go out fowling, in foul weather, and slaughtering pheasants tamer than barn-door fowls, we do consider "a deed most foul," as Macbeth observed when he was going out to have a shot in the wood of Dunsinane.

My object in this tale is to show the effects of this same adjunct upon a class—far above that whence I procured my former *dramatis personæ*—the lords and ladies of the soil which produces the oak, the elm, and other noble trees, under whose shade are nurtured, sometimes with more care than is bestowed upon their own families,

> The pheasant, with his varied vest,
> Admired less for flesh than feather;
> The partridge with his horse-shoe breast,
> And grouse that feeds among the heather.

But before I begin my little tale, I cannot resist relating a circumstance closely bearing

upon the subject I am about to illustrate, and which occurred within my ken.

I dwelt near to one of the good old school of country gentlemen, who deemed it a part of his social duties to keep a hospitable board, and a house as open as his heart. At a certain period of every year he had been accustomed to receive from a neighbour, who was blessed with a park, a haunch of venison; for which the keeper received a fee of half-a-guinea, and of which all his neighbours within a certain imaginary circle were invited to partake.

All of a sudden—no reason being assigned—the noble haunch was superseded by the ignominious shoulder, which was very properly committed to the mercies of those who might, in their ignorance, mistake it for mutton—the servants.

A second season came round, and a second shoulder was sent; which was, still more properly, sent back to the sender, as a hint not to send another—which was taken.

Our old friend could not quite make the matter out. The venison-grower and he were as good friends as ever. Nothing had oc-

curred to interrupt the harmony in which they had always lived; of course, he could not demand an explanation of a brother squire as to why a wrong joint had been sent, although he could and would have done so of his butcher; so the matter dropped, and the annual venison-feast dropped too.

It so happened that I went up to London with my old friend, who, always "on hospitable thoughts intent," looked out for something to take back with him wherewith to tickle the palates of his neighbours. At a celebrated fish-shop in the far west of London, he saw a string of well-fatted and well-hung haunches of venison. He stopped his carriage, alighted, and having selected the fattest, inquired where it was bred.

"In Mr. ——'s park, sir: I take all his bucks and game, at least the prime parts, and he takes it out in fish."

"Whe-ew-ewh!" whistled my old friend, as he paid three guineas and a half for the haunch—"Whe-ew-ewh—the murder's out."

He said no more; but, when we returned home, a large party was invited to eat of the haunch.

"Fine-flavoured venison, indeed," said some one. "Who sent it to you?"

"No one; but if you approve of the flavour of it, you can have one any day by sending three guineas and a half in money or fish to Mr. —— there. He sold it, and I bought it—not of him, but of his fishmonger in —— Street."

Mr. —— who was present—purposely invited—drank off a glass of port so hurriedly that it went "the wrong way:" he was obliged to leave the room; and I never saw him at our old friend's table afterwards. Poor man! he had not above four or five thousand per annum, which may account for his being willing to barter for instead of buying his fish.

Now to my tale.

Among the fashionable departures, announced in a morning paper, was "Mr. Gretton Denbury, from Long's Hotel, for a few days' shooting in the extensive and well-preserved domains of Sir Grice Pounceforth, at Veriton Grange, Suffolk;" and on the morning of the day named in the paper, the Orwell steamboat, bound for Ipswich, ere she left her moorings, received on her deck, among other

passengers and luggage, two large portmanteaus, two tall men, evidently servant and master, and two very large gun-cases amalgamated into one.

The servant, having deposited the luggage in the hands of the responsible person on board, dived down into the depths of the fore-cabin, and was no more seen. The master, carelessly wrapped up in a pilot-coat, and wearing a seal-skin cap on his head, drew a volume from his pocket, and, although the weather was somewhat cold and foggy, seemed to despise a November air, and, having placed himself on a bench amidships, quietly perused his book.

Two "heavy swells," dressed in the excess of Cockney-sporting fashion, came on board, with one servant and two dogs, just as the warps were cast off. They gave their orders to their servant in loud, vulgar tones, made themselves very fussy with the captain and other men on board, no doubt with the intention of impressing upon their fellow-voyagers the notion that they were somebodies. Seeing that there were but few

females on board, and those few belonging to quite the lower classes, occupying the fore-castle, they turned their attentions to the male passengers; and observing Mr. Gretton Denbury "taking it cool," as they said, but rather too "roughly togged out" to be "any body uncommon," they walked up to him, and, tapping him on the shoulder, asked how many miles it might be to Ipswich.

Gretton looked at them for a moment; and, although very good-natured, and not at all inclined to display any pride, he could not fail to see through the vulgarity of their natures; so he quietly said—

"You had better inquire of my servant: you will find him in the fore-cabin."

The twain looked exceeding fierce; but Gretton did not observe their looks, for his eyes were fixed upon his book.

"Captain," said one of them, "who is that cursed cool fellow there, in a pea-coat?"

"In that ugly seal-skin cap—there—pretending to be literary?" added the other.

"Wait till we've cleared the Pool before you ask questions.—Ease her! Stop her!" &c.

"Curse *his* impudence!" said the first of the speakers, whom we may as well introduce at once as Jim Smith — a knowing shot at Highbury Barn.

"They're a very low set," added Tom Wiggins, a well-known frequenter of "The Ring." "Let us go below and get some breakfast."

This meal appeared to last as far as Gravesend; and, when the pair came on deck, each with a cigar in his mouth, it was evident that the matutinal meal had not been limited to tea and coffee. They chatted to everybody, swaggered about the deck, and looked very killingly at a pretty young woman who sat beside an old weather-beaten sailor, nursing an infant, in the bows of the vessel. At last they addressed her, and became so rude in their observations, that the old sailor bade her go below, and then, having seen that she was out of sight and hearing, quietly asked Messrs. Jim Smith and Tom Wiggins if they really were rash enough to mistake themselves for gentlemen.

"What will you take to drink, old fellow?" asked Mr. Jim Smith.

"Don't you wish you may inherit a fortune?" added Mr. Wiggins; "a bunch of fives, for instance—look out, old one." And before the poor old sailor was aware of it, he received a severe cuff on his tempest-beaten forehead.

"Shame!—shame!—to strike an old man like that!" said the passengers and the crew.

"Stand aside," cried the sailor; "old as I am, it never shall be said that I took a blow without returning it."

"Hold, my fine old man — your strength has been wasted in the service of your country, doubtless. Leave it to a younger arm to protect your gray hairs."

The sailor looked round to see who his defender was, and perceived the young man, Gretton Denbury, who had been so quietly engaged in reading abaft the funnel. "Bless you, sir," said he, "but I'm worth something yet, when my daughter is insulted by such whipper-snappers as those."

Jim Smith and his friend Tom Wiggins

enjoyed the scene amazingly, as it appeared by their antics, for the one was "taking an observation" with his fingers, and the other winking furiously, and putting himself in a boxing attitude.

"Are you not ashamed of yourselves, to insult an aged man?" asked Gretton, in a determined tone.

"Who the —— are you?" said Mr. Wiggins. "Go to ——;" but before the vulgar word passed his lips he was on his back at the further side of the vessel, from a well-directed blow of Denbury's fist.

Jim Smith declared "he'd never *stand* that." He did not for half a second. He was lying beside his friend before he had time to speak even in his behalf.

An unalloyed shout of joy from the old sailor, in which he was joined by the passengers and the ship's crew, proclaimed to Messrs. Smith and Wiggins that their proceedings were unpopular. They, therefore, demanded Mr. Gretton Denbury's card, which was not given to them, called him a snob, and retired into a side cabin, to enjoy the re-

mainder of the voyage in company with their servant, who seemed to make himself "one of us."

"Sir Grice Pounceforth's carriage waits for Mr. Gretton Denbury," said an hotel commissioner, coming on board, as the Orwell reached the quay. Gretton stepped ashore amidst the respectful salutations of his fellow voyagers.

"That's the fellow's name, is it? We will find out who and what he is, when we get back to town," said Jim Smith.

"And take the shine out of him too," added Tom Wiggins. "But let us follow that chap that announced the carriage; we shall learn from him a little more about him."

The Commissioner, on being questioned, could only reply that the gentleman was a friend of Sir Grice Pounceforth, of Veriton Grange, and was doubtless going there to join the grand battue, which was to commence on the following day.

"Veriton Grange! Why that is the very place where George Dareall means us to shoot

to-morrow. He has a snug little bit of freehold right between two preserves, and would not sell it, though this Sir Grice something has offered thousands for it, to save himself from the gallows," said Jim Smith.

At this moment they were joined by the identical George Dareall, a retired publican, who had made his fortune by poaching and game-selling. He drove up in a flashy-coloured phaeton, and having saluted his friends, by raising his elbow, bade them jump in, traps and all, as he was ready for a start.

On their road the Londoners did not fail to acquaint their friend with the treatment they had met with from the supercilious stranger. George did not sympathize with his friends in the slightest degree; but laughed so excessively at the notion of two scientific men having been floored by one of the uninitiated, that they were very indignant, and talked of sending a challenge that very night to Mr. Gretton Denbury, to fight either with fists or pistols, or whatever weapon he might prefer.

"Don't talk like a couple of fools," said the elegant George Dareall. "If you were to

send a challenge, do you think a high chap like that, asked down here to meet ministers and members of parliament, would take any notice of it? Pooh! I know them well. You shall take your revenge out of the pheasants and hares. Rely upon it, it is much pleasanter shooting, for they cannot return your fire."

Jim Smith and Tom Wiggins of course laughed at their host's wit, although they were in a very bad humour; and, as they had been drinking and smoking all day long, they were very soon tipsy after they had indulged at their host's expense. Before they went to bed they had pledged each other in many a glass not to leave the country before they had either caned or horsewhipped, or in some manner avenged themselves upon Mr. Gretton Denbury; which was so very amusing to George Dareall, that he laughed excessively, and offered to lay them a pony each that if they met him they would not dare even to speak to him, much less to lay a hand or foot upon him. "Done—done." The bets were taken and booked by George. Tom Wiggins

attempted to book his bet; but he was so tipsy he could not make a letter. Smith had sense enough left not to make the attempt.

After a few more glasses, and a jolly attempt at a song, Messrs. Smith and Wiggins reeled off to what they were pleased to call their cribs.

There we will leave them, and return to our young friend Gretton Denbury.

"Denbury, my boy, I'm glad to see you," said old Sir Grice, shaking him heartily by the hand. "I hope the nerves are all right? You must shoot well to-morrow, for I have backed your scores against the field, and Lord William is down here."

Gretton assured him that nothing could induce him to try to shoot well more than the notion that he was pitted against Lord William.

Having thus got rid of the old baronet, who was rather apt to hold a guest by the hand too long, Gretton walked up the drawing-room, to where two ladies were seated. They did not rise to greet him, but, having shaken him by the hand, made room for him on the

sofa between them. By the uncertain but cheerful light of a blazing fire, and one pair of wax candles, a spectator might have seen that Gretton was on a very friendly footing with both the ladies, and on something more than a friendly footing with the younger of the two; for, when he had taken his seat, he retained the hands that had been placed in his, and even ventured to press them to his lips. The fact was, that Gretton was engaged to Jane Pounceforth, and would have been united to her ere this, but he had a troublesome uncle, an old East Indian officer, who would not die, although he had an *unmusical*, that is, a dis-organ-ized liver, for some years, and had drunk enough Cheltenham water to float a seventy-four. Neither would he make his nephew an addition to his allowance, although every friend of the family had urged upon him the cruelty of keeping longer asunder those whom love had long made one. Not he. He had never been married himself, and he thought he was doing his nephew a kindness by keeping him single as long as he could. He said he was sure he would bless

him for so doing long before the honey-month was ended.

What passed between the ladies and the gentleman we would not betray if we could. All that passed which has any reference to this little tale was an expression of regret, on Jane's part, that Gretton, who was fond of fair manly sport, should have consented to join in the unsportsmanlike proceedings of the morrow.

"My poor birds!" said Jane. "I used to go down daily to the keeper's to feed them with my own hands when they were little creatures; and even after they were turned out into the covers around, they would come upon the lawn and follow me as if they knew me. They will be shot at among the rest, and either killed, or, what is worse, wounded, and creep into the woods and die a miserable, lingering death. And then the danger to yourself. Among a party of ten or twelve guns there is sure to be some accident. I wish you would not go with them, but take the dogs and go to some distant cover by yourself; you will have less shooting, per-

haps, but better sport, and will not be exposed to the mercies of some bungling shot."

Gretton pressed the hand that rested in his, and assured Jane that he detested the battue as much as she could do, but that he could not avoid joining it, as her father had pitted him to shoot against the whole of the party: he was especially anxious to satisfy Lord William that there were men in the world who could shoot as well as he could, although he looked upon himself as the crack shot in the country.

Jane had time only to extract a promise from Gretton that he would be very careful not to place himself in a dangerous spot, or to keep too forward in his zeal for slaughter, before the guests entered the drawing-room, and he was forced to quit her side to pay his respects to sundry M.P.'s and one cabinet minister. The dinner was speedily announced; and, when the ladies had quitted the dinner-table, Sir Grice grew loud in his praises of his keepers, who had been so active in the discharge of their duties that they had con-

victed no less than fifteen most notorious poachers during the past month.

He was sincerely congratulated by his friends on having such very efficient keepers, and highly applauded for keeping up the stock of game in the country, which, as they said, with the preservation of foxes, was the only thing that would induce country gentlemen to reside upon their estates.

Sir Grice cordially agreed with his friends, and begged permission to propose one toast: of course, it was granted to him. He filled his glass with claret, and drank to "The preservatives—the benefactors of their country."

"Do you include your tenants in that toast?" asked the cabinet minister, after he had done justice to it in a bumper.

"Oh, decidedly," said Sir Grice. "The fact is, I have laid all my little farms into large ones, so that, where I had some twenty men who were worrying my steward to death for compensation for damage done to crops, I have now only four or five; and as they are wealthy, and fond of sporting, they give me very little trouble. I don't allow them to

shoot, but I give them a day or two's coursing every season, and they all hunt with the fox-hounds; besides, I only keep just enough rabbits to feed the foxes, and I allow my keepers the remainder for finding themselves in powder and shot."

"Devilish liberal!" said somebody.

"I suppose we shall get some shooting to-morrow," drawled out Lord William.

Sir Grice assured him he had counted upwards of three hundred pheasants at feed, in one small patch of buck-wheat, only a day or two before.

"I am very glad to hear it," said Lord William, "for I was out at ——— Hall the day before yesterday, and worked hard all day, with two other men, to kill one hundred and fifty brace, although we had fellows to load for us."

"Confounded slow work!" said the cabinet minister.

"Yes, and all owing to those infernal poachers; and I am sure the farmers encourage them," said Lord William.

A long discussion took place about the

Game Laws: and every body agreed that the penalties were not severe enough. Some were for transportation for every offence, and hanging for being out at night, with intent, &c.; and one gentleman went so far as to regret that the Forest Laws, so prudently made by the Normans, were not still in force. The conversation was then varied by discussing the merits of several new engines which had been invented to supersede man-traps, spring-guns, and dog-spears. Sir Grice was happy to inform the company that he had a very ingenious blacksmith in his village, who could supply them with a species of gin, so small, yet so strong in the spring, that if a man trod upon it, it "would cut his foot nearly off just above the ancle, in spite of a stout highlow."

Everybody expressed his intention of giving the clever workman a large order.

Now there was not one of the party present who, on any other subject but game-preserving, was not a most humane man. They were all good landlords, kind masters, and most liberal in their charities to their poor dependants;

yet, merely for the sake of keeping up the stock of game, they would not scruple to lay down in their covers an engine that would maim a man for life, or perhaps catch some boy by the leg who ventured into the wood to gather a half-pennyworth of nuts.

"You must look to your shooting to-morrow, my lord," said Sir Grice, "for I have backed Gretton Denbury against you and the field."

"I'll bet Gretton a pony to ——" But Gretton was gone. He had joined Jane and her mother some half hour after they had left the room.

A few bets were made and booked; and the whole party left the table to join the ladies. The butler whispered to his master, as he handed him his tea, that the head-keeper was in his study, and wished to speak to him on very particular business.

Sir Grice left the room, and was absent for some time. On his return, he found his friends engaged at whist or picquet, all with the exception of Gretton Denbury, who was enjoying a quiet chat with his future.

"Nothing the matter, I hope, Sir Grice?" said Gretton.

"I hope not," said the Baronet. "The keeper has been here to tell me that two Londoners, crack shots and fighting men, as he calls them, are come down to-day, with their guns, on a visit to George Dareall, a vulgar fellow, who has a strip of land running between two of my best preserves, and who does all he can to annoy me, although I have offered him ten times the value of the land to get rid of him. These two fellows, who came down by the steamer to-day, have doubtless been sent for on purpose to destroy every bird and hare that is driven out of cover to-morrow."

"I think I know the men; they were my fellow-passengers—two very vulgar fellows, but not over-courageous. I was obliged to chastise them for their insolence to a poor old seaman's daughter; and they bore their punishment very meekly."

Gretton, of course, had to relate what took place; and was rewarded for his zeal in the service of the fair sex by a kindly look from

Jane, and an approving speech from Sir Grice Pounceforth.

Shortly afterwards the ladies retired. Cards having no charms for Gretton, and being mindful of the bet which was to be decided on the morrow, he "consulted his nerves," and sought his bed.

The reader must imagine the breakfast; but, to aid his imagination, I must hint to him that it was not one of those jolly breakfasts which sportsmen eat when they have a day's fair work before them—a solid meal, with either a glass of good strong ale, or the minutest thimbleful of French cream, to prepare them to support some hours of toil; it was merely a breakfast—prolonged, by the aid of newspapers and letter-reading, until eleven by the clock.

Then, instead of seeing a brace of keepers, with some four or five brace of spaniels, waiting in the lawn, you merely see some eight or nine louts, clad in leathern jerkins and smalls, to resist the thorns, and one poor dog of a retriever breed, to pick up wounded birds and hares. You see, also, as many gentlemen's

servants as there are gentlemen going out, each with *two* double-barrelled guns with him, one of which he is to load as fast as he can, while his master is blazing away as fast as *he* can with the other.

You get to the cover side; and Mr. Head-keeper marshals his men, and then marshals you. He places you in a line, and you march down the cover as regularly as if you were going to attack a human foe instead of a lot of poor hares and pheasants, who, having been unmolested all the summer months, look up into your face, as much as to ask you what you can possibly want with them. If it were not for the beaters and their poles, they would let you pass them without even attempting to fly or run away from you! However, they find what you want—whiz!—whirr!—tit-up!—bang!—bang!—bang! some twelve or fourteen are kicking, struggling, and panting on the ground, and an impudent under-keeper, with a hazel wand in his hand, quietly notches down what each gentleman claims to have killed.

The upper keeper calls a halt, asks, "All

ready?" and at the answer "All," cries "Forward;" on you go again, and so on to the end of the day. Baugh! is it not enough to make the real sportsman, who goes out with his dogs, and enjoys hunting for and finding his game, and killing it fairly, emetically disposed?

We will leave Lord William, Gretton Denbury, the cabinet minister, and all the party, firing and scoring as hard as they possibly can, and Sir Grice Pounceforth looking on and congratulating himself upon the respectable show he shall make in the county paper when "the total" of three or four days' shooting in his well-stocked preserves shall appear chronicled in its columns.

Reader, just come here. Do you see that long narrow field which runs between those two fine oak-covers? it is not above five acres in length, and about two in breadth. It was a piece of barley, and it was not mown. The ears were merely cut off and carried home, and they scarcely paid the expense of cartage. The stubble is left long on purpose; for that little strip, immediately between Sir Grice

Pounceforth's two best preserves, belongs to George Dareall, somewhile keeper of "The Dog and Partridge," and now a retired gentleman. He has set his solicitor "to work" for compensation for damage done to his crops; and now he is there with two crack London shots to "take it out of the baronet," by bagging every bird and hare that comes across in its attempt to escape from the battue-shooters, who are regularly tramping down the great wood.

If the reader will accompany us to the end of this strip of land, he will see Mr. George Dareall, his two friends, Jim Smith and Tom Wiggins, quietly seated at a very good, solid luncheon, consisting of a ham and chickens, &c., with a very large stone bottle of good strong beer, and another, a little smaller, of brandy and water. At their sides, and not very far from them, are the Londoners' servant and George's "man." They are busily engaged in filling the chay-cart in which the luncheon was brought down with the game that has been killed. As soon as it is all

carted, George Dareall asks his man "how many?"

"Two-and-twenty brace of pheasants, thirteen brace of hares, a leash of partridges, and two woodcocks," replies the man.

"Cart them home, and come back as soon as you can," says the master. "I can hear by the report of the guns that they will soon go into the smaller wood; and then all that have escaped them and us must come back again."

Away goes the man; and, while the three gentlemen are finishing their luncheon, the servant is busily employed cleaning out—that is, washing out the barrels of three double guns, stout in the stock, very large in the bore, and capable of carrying two ounces and a half of shot in each barrel. "Regular murderers, and no mistake!" as Jim Smith pronounced them.

Luncheon being finished, a cigar-case and a box of lucifers were produced, and the three lighted up; and, as they whiffed and imbibed brandy and water, calmly listened to Sir Grice's party as they "blazed away."

"They must have had good sport, and shot well," said Jim Smith, "for they shoot every moment, and but few birds get away."

"As to sport," said George Dareall, "there is no sport in it; the birds are as thick as they can lie together, and as regularly fed with barley as domestic poultry; and as for shooting, Lord William and that young chap that came down with you yesterday never dream of missing, and I dare say the rest of them shoot well."

"As for that young chap," said Tom Wiggins, who had not forgot his knock-down of the day before, "I should like no better sport than to shoot him for a fifty, and fight him for a hundred."

"Ay, and so should I," said Jim Smith. "I'd teach him the manners of a gentleman."

George Dareall only laughed, and told them not to be foolish, but to make haste and finish their cigars and grog; for, by the sound of the guns, he knew that the party were already entering upon the smaller wood, and the game, now on the alert, would soon cross back again to the big wood.

These words induced the two Londoners to drink and smoke more fiercely. They also induced a man who had been watching their proceedings, himself unseen, to hurry across a field leading to the upper end of the cover, and tell the head-keeper all he had seen and heard.

"Hold hard," cried the head-keeper; and having informed his party of the news which he had just heard, it was resolved that Lord William and Gretton Denbury, the two best shots, and who had shot *ties*, should go forward and so frustrate the sport of Dareall and his friends, by shooting at the game as it tried to slip out of one cover into the other.

Lord William went down one side of the cover, and Gretton on the other, each accompanied by his servant. When they arrived at the bottom of it, they entered it, and took their stations in a drive which commanded the whole breadth of it. Down came birds and hares as thick and fast as flocks of turkeys and sheep; and, when they saw their enemies before them, the poor birds, instead of running down the bank and slipping along the ditches, as they would have done had they not been

intercepted, rose and gave themselves up as fair shots to those posted ready for them.

Lord William and Gretton fired as fast as a loaded gun could be placed in their hands, and an under-keeper kept on scoring each man's birds as they fell from the guns. All this time, George Dareall and his friends were not idle. They understood, the moment they heard the first shot fired at the bottom of the cover, that some guns had been placed there to spoil their sport. They, therefore, deeming such conduct on the part of Sir Grice very ungentlemanly, fired away as hard as they could.

Now it so happened, after the main of the game had passed down the cover, and the beaters were heard approaching, that a fine cock pheasant rose immediately behind Gretton Denbury, and flew straight up over his head: he put up his gun, and just as it topped the trees pulled at it. The bird flew on as if unhurt, and Lord William called out "a dead miss."

"A dead bird, you mean," said Gretton; "he is hit up the back, and will tower."

"Five to one he does not," said Lord William.

"Done—let us go out of cover and see," said Gretton.

They both rushed to the same gap, and sprang over the fence and ditch.

"There—see—there—look—I told you so—he is whirling round and round, and will soon fall—there, down he comes close to our feet," said Gretton; and as he said so it was, the pheasant fell dead within a few yards of them.

Gretton stepped forward to pick it up, but a voice cried out, "Leave that bird alone, and be off my land."

The two gentlemen looked round, and saw George Dareall, and Smith and Wiggins, close upon them. It was quite evident that the two latter were tipsy, or nearly so. Lord William lifted his hat, and begged Mr. Dareall's pardon for having set foot on his land, but alleged the bet that he had made as an excuse. Gretton did the same, and George seemed willing to say no more about it, and let them return to the cover; but Jim Smith

and Tom Wiggins called him a sneaking fellow, and swore that, if they were in his place, they would not let two proud fellows trespass there for nothing, but would take their guns away from them.

"No, no," said George; "it was only to decide a bet. They seem to be civil chaps enough. Keep quiet, do."

"Civil! why that is the haughty fellow who struck us both yesterday,—him," said Smith.

"Ay, and richly you deserved it," said Gretton. "But come away, my lord, we shall not derive either pleasure or profit by holding a parley with such men as these."

"Who do you call *men?*" said Wiggins, walking up to him,—"not yourself and your noble friend there, I hope. Lay down your guns, and we will fight you fairly."

Lord William smiled and turned away; Gretton was about to do the same, when Wiggins struck him on the arm with the barrels of his gun. Gretton dropped his own gun, and seized hold of Wiggins's by the muzzle: he had only time to say, "What do

ended the Battue.

· Grice Pounceforth, at his daughter's
st, had all his game destroyed; and
;e Dareall sent the narrow strip of land
between two well-stocked covers into
ıarket, but could not find a purchaser.
ɔot was *tabooed*.

CHAPTER XI.

A WILD GOOSE CHASE.

Fly not yet, 'tis just the hour.
T. MOORE.

Mr. Damon Grimsby was fat, fair, and forty-five years old. He dwelt at Finchley, and was well enough to do in the world to enable him to do nothing but just what he pleased. He had three hundred pounds per annum, paid quarterly; a pretty little cottage; no wife; a respectable old lady housekeeper; and a wheezy French poodle, with one eye, that could do anything but talk—at least so his master said. He certainly could sit up "on his beam-ends" for a considerable period, begging for bread and meat. He could hold a pipe in his mouth, and look as wise as any smoker in the world. He could carry a stick or a basket in his mouth, and if it was not

too cold, he would plunge into a pond and fetch out a bung which his master carried about with him on purpose to display his dog's cleverness. Lion, as he was called, was his master's constant companion—until his master took to shooting. He was then transferred to the companionship of Mistress Langsworthy, the housekeeper, and his master adopted a pointer in his place.

"Had Mr. Damon Grimsby never taken to shooting before he was forty-five years old?" inquires some curious reader.

"Yes—but not to the shooting of game. He had, ever since his retirement to Finchley, been addicted to the destruction of small birds and fieldfares, when they were in season. He could kill every other one—sitting."

"Then how came he to take to game-destroying?"

"Because he thought it gentlemanly, and was remarkably fond of partridges. A small manor, too, was advertised to be let in his neighbourhood. He went to view it. He saw two rabbits at play in a clover-field, and heard something crow in a farm-yard which

he really believed to be a cock-pheasant—so he hired the manor for the season, exchanged his single flint-gun for a double percussion, and bought a warranted stanch pointer."

Day after day did Damon walk over his beat, and, although he had plenty of shooting, he had but little success. He really had two coveys of birds on his manor, until one of them was netted; and at least a dozen rabbits in a hedge-row. The one covey of partridges grew so wild from being constantly pursued, that the moment Ponto or his master entered the field in which they were basking or feeding, they got up and flew to the further end of the manor; and, when he went after them, they flew back again. Damon always shot at them, although they were hundreds of yards from him—for he liked *shooting*, even if he did not kill. He got exercise, too, and got through the long day, which was a great thing for a man to do who had no other indoor amusement but reading the daily paper.

It was a great fund of fun for the farmer and his labourers to watch Damon Grimsby and his dog Ponto, as they pursued the par-

tridges. The master cried out "Heigh on, there!" as he had been instructed to do by the dog-merchant—but Ponto merely looked up into his face, gave a bit of a caper, and sniffed the air. As the birds rose immediately, Mr. Grimsby gave Ponto credit for an exceedingly good nose.

One day the farmer and his men were astonished to hear, after the bang! bang! of both barrels, an extraordinary shouting, hallooing, and howling. They ran up to the hedge, fully expecting to see either the sportsman or his dog shot; but, when they looked over into the next field, they saw Mr. Grimsby dancing about like a maniacal Dervish, throwing his hat up into the air, and screaming and shouting with delight. Ponto was sitting on his tail by his side, with his head up in the air, and howling in that peculiarly doleful way in which dogs do howl when they are said to be "baying the moon."

"He's shot in the head," cried the farmer; "for they always spin round in that way when they are hit in the head."

"No, it's the spine: see, he's going to

tower," said one of the men, as Mr. Grimsby gave a miraculous bound upwards.

Up ran the farmer and his men as fast as they could. Ponto ceased howling, and took to barking. Mr. Damon popped his hat on his head, and looked very sheepish for a minute—but then—he rushed at the farmer, shook him violently by the hand, and begged him earnestly to congratulate him.

"What upon?" said the farmer.

"I've killed three—three—all at one fire! —there they are," said Damon, and sure enough there were three partridges lying at his feet—dead.

The fact was, Mr. Grimsby was annoyed by Mrs. Langsworthy's constant inquiry, on his return home, "Where's the game?" and at being always obliged to tell her "he had had no luck." As he found it impossible to fill his bags in the regular way, he was resolved to try what he called the "fieldfare dodge." He knew where the partridges came to roost; so he hid himself behind a tree, and, the moment they lighted on the ground, he pulled both barrels at the covey, and three

birds lay weltering in their gore. This was the cause of his joy, in which Ponto evidently participated.

"Killed them *flying*, of course?" said the farmer.

"I'll trouble you not to insult me," said Damon, as he bagged his birds, and marched off with indignant looks.

How he did crow over Mrs. Langsworthy that evening! She grew so tired at last of hearing the description of how he had killed the birds, one after another, without missing a single shot, that she took up her candle and retired to bed three hours before her time.

This was abominable! What was her master to do with himself, with no one to talk to, for the first time in his country life? He resolved to go out and spend his evening in a tavern. There was a snug house about half a mile from his cottage. As an excuse for entering it, he packed up his three birds, directed them to a friend in London, and begged of the landlord to allow him to sit down while he saw the parcel booked.

Jerry Worsem, the host, smelt a new customer in his highly respectable neighbour. He showed him into his own parlour within the bar, and treated him with the greatest civility and a glass of sherry negus. Damon Grimsby was flattered by such an unexpected generosity on the part of a landlord, and, to show his sense of his civility, spent the whole evening and a considerable amount of silver in his bar-parlour.

Jerry was a sportsman, as far as shooting was concerned, although he shot but little, except at the pigeon and sparrow box. Of course, knowing that his neighbour rented a manor and went out daily, he did not omit to inquire the nature and amount of the sport he had met with.

Mr. Grimsby was somewhat shy at first, shuffled, and prevaricated, and would not speak out. At length, warmed by the subject —his favourite subject—and a second glass of sherry negus, he confidentially told his host the result of his day's sport, but not of the illegitimate manner in which he had bagged his birds.

With every succeeding glass of negus the three unfortunate partridges were shot over again; and, considering that his inventive faculties were powerfully drawn upon in the description, the tales were very little at variance with each other. Jerry listened to each repetition as seriously as if it was a new story; and, when his customer left, at a very late hour for him, he (the customer) told him that he was a pleasant fellow, and, as he shook him by the hand, assured him that he should often come down of an evening and spend an hour or two with him.

In spite of Mrs. Langsworthy's exhortations and entreaties—for she was dull by herself, and dreaded lest her master should become fond of "liquors and light company" —Mr. Grimsby kept his promise. As soon as he had returned from shooting, and had had his cup of tea, he slipped off down to Jerry's, and was not seen at home again till eleven at night. The only difference, however, that the faithful housekeeper could discover in her master was, that his clothes smelt very powerfully of tobacco, and that he

was a little shaky in the morning, until he had had a little wee drop of brandy in his tea. These, with an abundance of game in the larder, were the only differences observable in his own establishment from the nightly visits of Mr. Grimsby to the house of his friend Jerry Worsem. How he came by all the game he brought home was a mystery —but what business was it of anybody's? The only observation Mrs. Langsworthy made about it was, that "it was so nicely killed, she never hurt her teeth against a *shot.*"

Winter set in. A frost covered the ground with bright sparkling crystals. The fieldfares and redwings grew tame and approachable. Damon took the field against them. Here he was at home—up to his work, as he said. As he was creeping about along ditches and behind hedge-rows, to keep himself out of sight of his game, he came suddenly on a pond. Whirr! up flew something. Grimsby did not know what it was, but he pulled boldly at it—both barrels at once, to insure hitting it; down it came, and when he went to pick it up he found it was a

real wild duck! How his eyes did sparkle as he examined the rich purple hues on the neck of the mallard, and looked at his toe-nails to see if they were really *black*—that sure distinguisher of the wild bird from the common scavenger or gutter-scraper. So great was his joy that he did not stop to load again, but pocketed his duck, and ran as speedily as eight *lustra* and one over would allow him to show his prize to his friend Jerry, whose congratulations at his success were so hearty and so grateful to the feelings of the successful sportsman, that Mr. Grimsby offered to purchase another wild duck, and to have the pair dressed at Jerry's house, and make a night of it afterwards.

The day appointed for the feast arrived in due course. The birds were roasted to a turn; and both Mr. Grimsby and the landlord asserted that the Finchley duck, which had been marked by having a bit of string tied round one of his legs, was by far the finest that had ever been tasted, and beat the other "by chalks."

Over their port wine—for Damon had read

in his cookery-book that all brown meats demanded *red* wines—of course the talk was limited to wild-fowl shooting. A stranger came in in the course of the evening; and, as it was very frosty and cold, he was, with Mr. Grimsby's permission, allowed to take a seat in the bar-parlour. It so chanced that the gentleman was a great traveller, in the commercial sense of the word, and had frequently visited the coast and witnessed the method of shooting fowl in punts and from boats. He gave so vivid a description of the thousands of geese, ducks, widgeon, dun-birds and other fowl that he had seen in one flock—of the immense guns that cut "regular lanes" through them—and of the hundreds that the water-dogs picked up and brought to shore in their mouths, that Damon Grimsby longed to be "at them" himself. He thought of his one-eyed poodle Lion, and of the clever way in which he brought the bung out of a pond—could there be a doubt that he would plunge into the ocean and secure a wild-fowl? Damon thought there could not. He intimated to the traveller the longing which he

felt to be participator of such sport, and told him he was provided with a most excellent and well-proved water-dog—"a regular diver, and no mistake"—but was wanting in the articles of a gun capable of carrying two ounces of powder and half a pound of shot, and a canoe to float about in.

"My dear friend—if you will permit me to call you so—your object may be easily and economically accomplished. I can give you a note to another friend of mine, who keeps a comfortable little inn on the banks of a river near the coast of Essex. He is devoted to fowling, and provided with every requisite. Run down by the rail, take a fly over to his house, give him my note, and I'll answer for it you will never regret taking my advice."

Damon Grimsby shook the traveller's hand, thanked him for his kindness, and promised to avail himself of it. The note was written, and, after another bottle of port and a pipe or two, the wild-fowl shooter *in prospectu* tacked about on his way home.

A difficulty arose on which Grimsby had

not calculated. Mrs. Langsworthy, when she heard of his intentions, positively refused to allow him to go so far from home, and to expose himself in the centre of the ocean in such cold weather. "It was committing suicide, so it was; and as to poor Lion, he was so stiff already that she was obliged to rub him over with empyreumatic oil night and morning. She would never consent to the murder of a man and a dog for the sake of a mere duck, that could be bought at the door for a couple of shillings:—no, she would never consent, not even if the refusal cost her her comfortable place."

In vain did Damon Grimsby call her an obstinate old fool and many other hard names; in vain did he explain to her that he was merely going into a nice dry boat on a calm, waveless river, comfortably wrapped up in warm clothing, with a good fire on board: it was all of no use—she shook her head, sobbed, and called it a wilful tempting of Providence. "They had lived together a long time, and she should be sorry to leave so good a master—but, sooner than consent to

his being his own murderer, or even coming home with a violent cold and a quinsy, or perhaps the shivery-shakeries"—as she called the ague—" she'd wander forth a she-pilgrim, in search of another place."

Damon was dead beat. He gave in—at least, he seemed to do so—and resolved to effect by stratagem what he could not effect by argument. Some people may be apt to sneer, and think it improbable that a man, a man of independent property, too, should submit to have his actions controlled by a hired servant. Pooh! they know nothing about it. Many an old single gentleman and widower will tell them that a man must submit to be indulgent to one who knows all his ways and wants, and anticipates and provides for all his little fancies.

What was Damon Grimsby's stratagem? The day was at hand on which he was to receive his quarterly dividend, and Damon did not grant a power of attorney to any one, but went up to the Bank and received his money himself. Lion, too, the one-eyed poodle, underwent a quarterly trimming; and, as no

one with sufficient taste to gratify his master's eye resided at Finchley, he was taken up to town to a skilful practitioner. Lion knew quarter-day as well as his master did; and well he might, for he was not the only animal that was *fleeced* on that day.

As a full fortnight had elapsed since Mr. Grimsby had said one word about fowl-shooting to his housekeeper, when he reminded her that quarter-day was at hand, and that he should take Lion up to town, get him shaved, and spend a day or two, as usual, with a very particular Christmas friend, Mrs. Langsworthy thought of nothing else but of having Lion properly washed and combed, and of making out her little list of necessaries to carry them through the next quarter. Jerry Worsem smiled, through his bar-parlour window, as he saw his customer and Lion pass by on the top of the Finchley stage. *He* knew how poor Mrs. Langsworthy had been deceived.

Cold blew the wind, and thick and fast fell the snow, as Mr. Damon Grimsby alighted from the train at —— station, on the Eastern

Counties Railway. Lion shivered as fiercely as his master when he was dragged out on the platform. He tried to bark at the man who abstracted him, but he could not, his teeth chattered so.

"A fly on to Squallton," said Damon. "Let it be got ready immediately."

"Sorry to say, sir," said the clerk of the station, "all the flies have disappeared for the winter."

"Well, a post-chaise then," said Damon.

"They are all dead and gone, sir. Not one left in the county," said the clerk. "*We* have exterminated them."

"How am I to get on to Squallton, then?" asked the shivering traveller.

"You can hire a buggy or a shay-cart up at the tavern, if they are at home (which they seldom are at this time of night); and if not, you can sleep there and go on some time to-morrow or next day," suggested a policeman.

Damon went up to the tavern, indicated by a melancholy-looking oil-lamp, with Lion in a string, for fear he should lose him. He ran all the way, and stamped his feet heavily

to get a little warmth in them. Upon inquiring of the landlord if he could be transported in any sort of vehicle to Squallton, he was answered in the affirmative, if he would only wait half an hour, while the horse, which had just come home from a long journey, masticated a feed of corn.

Damon Grimsby sat down, fool that he was, before a very large fire, in his great coat and comforter, had a large glass of hot brandy and water, and then fell asleep. Lion, in the latter operation, followed his master's example. The ostler, who really had a strong sympathy with his fellow-servant, the horse, would not wake the gentleman going to Squallton, because the longer he slept the more rest the poor jaded nag would enjoy.

Damon slept about two hours, woke with a start, pulled out his watch, and said something which sounded like a naughty word. He rung the bell violently, and demanded to know how much longer he was to be detained there, and why his conveyance was not ready.

"Bin at the door this hour and a half," said the ostler, "till the horse got so chilly

I was obligated for to put him into the stable again."

"Bring him out immediately."

"Very cold out o' doors, sir," said the tavern-keeper; "let me recommend a glass of something short before you start, and a short pipe to smoke as you go along."

Damon Grimsby declined.

"You don't know this part of the country, sir—you'll catch the cold chills as sure as you are alive, if you go out of this hot room and sit in our cart for seven long miles such a night as this is. You've nothing extra to put on, either."

"Only a carpet-bag," said Damon; "but if I feel chilly I can get a little something as I go along."

"You will be puzzled to do that, sir, for you will not pass an inn or a public between this and Squallton, except the ferry-house, where they keep nothing but very bad beer."

Damon thought the host said all this from interested motives, so he positively refused to take his advice. The cart came to the door. Lion was deposited in the straw at the bottom

of it, and his master climbed up to the seat by the driver's side. Away they went, and at a pretty fair pace, considering that the nag had done his twenty miles already that day.

Mr. Damon Grimsby was disposed to be chatty when he started, and asked the driver a great many questions; but the ostler, knowing from experience the bad effects of an Essex evening fog, merely grunted an assent or a dissent through the folds of a very thick neckcloth: so Damon grew tired of having all the talk to himself. He sat silent and shivering for about half an hour, when he grew so intensely cold that he began to wish he had taken his host's advice, and taken something short and a short pipe. However, he said nothing until, to his great surprise, he went down a sort of bank and saw a wide river before him.

"I wonder whether it is fordable, or whether we must hail the boat," said the ostler; "but here goes for a try:—I think I can see the posteses."

Before Mr. Grimsby could ask what he

meant, he found the cart entering the water; and before many minutes had elapsed, he found that the water was returning the compliment by entering the cart. He said nothing, until he felt the waves half-way up his boots, and then he gave so sudden a scream that Lion, who was too wise to remain at the bottom of the cart, and had taken his seat by the side of his master, joined in the noise, and set up a doleful howl. The horse, alarmed, sprung forward and was quickly off his legs, and floating away with the tide, which was luckily running *in*, or they must have been carried out to sea.

"Oh! oh! — poor Mrs. Langsworthy! — poor Jerry Worsem! — oh! — oh! — oh! You've seen the last of your master and your friend!" groaned Damon.

"Sit still, sir: leave it all to the mare — she'll carry us through," said the hostler.

And so she did, but not without so much plunging, kicking, and struggling, that the water came up to poor Grimsby's knees, and poured in over his boots.

"Do as I do," said the ostler, quietly

pointing to his feet, which was resting on the foot-board.

"It is too late — too late — my boots are choke full."

"Never mind, sir; here we are, and there is the ferry-house."

"I would give a trifle for a glass of something spirituous to save my life," said Grimsby; "but your master says I can get nothing here but bad beer, and that I can't stand."

"Leave it to me—give me half-a-crown, and never say nothing to nobody as to what you got for it."

Grimsby with great difficulty drew out the coin. The ostler was not absent many minutes; and when he had resumed his seat he put a pint bottle into his customer's hands and bade him "pull away." Grimsby did—what it was he neither knew nor cared. It warmed the cockles of his heart, so he "pulled away" again and again, until a sort of dizziness came over him, and he fell back, in the back of the cart, by the side of Lion.

When he woke, he was in the parlour of

"The Ship," at Squallton. He rubbed his eyes, paid the driver liberally, and, opening his carpet-bag, drew out the traveller's letter and gave it to his new landlord, who had no sooner read it than he promised to show him all the sport in his power, but recommended him to have some hot gin and beer, and go to bed between the blankets immediately to save himself from the cold chills.

Damon obeyed. He drank largely of the mixture when he was in bed, and for ten hours afterwards knew nothing that was passing. When he was called in the morning, he was as well as ever he was in his life. He was going to get up, but the chambermaid told him not to do so until her master came up with the foul-weather dress, in which he was to go out fowling.

Mr. Grimsby laid himself down again: in a few minutes, Joe Winkles, his host, appeared, bearing what appeared to his guest clothes enough for six. First of all, he was ordered to put on a huge pair of thick knitted worsted stockings, then a pair of thicker Flushing trousers, over them again another

pair of thick stockings, and over them a huge pair of water-boots. On the upper part of his person he had to put on, besides his ordinary under-dress, a very substantial blue worsted Guernsey shirt, then a stout Flushing jacket, and over it a very heavy pilot-coat. On his head was placed a tarpaulin cap, lined with coarse flannel, called a sou'-wester, with a flap to it like a coalheaver's bonnet, and round his throat a huge mass of worsted something that was called a comforter.

Grimsby felt like "a hog in armour;" and when he looked at himself in the glass he did not know himself, and was quite sure that Mrs. Langsworthy would not have discovered her master in such a guise, or rather disguise. Even Lion seemed inclined to bark at him; and actually refused his civilities until he had ascertained, by sniffing at him, that he had a right to offer them.

Grimsby waddled down stairs, and found a good substantial breakfast prepared for him. He ate plentifully, for he was hungry, and "topped up" with a large glass of Cognac,

He then pronounced himself ready for a start, and anxious to begin.

"All right, sir," said Joe Winkles — "there's the guns, try which will suit you best; lots of powder and other ammunition on board."

Grimsby went to a cupboard near the fireplace, which Joe had opened, and took one of some half dozen guns which were piled up within it. He tried to lift it to his shoulder, but the weight was so great that he let it drop on Lion's back and well nigh broke it.

"Too heavy," said Joe, "try this."

Grimsby did. He could just lift it by putting his left hand out as far as he could, and said, "That's the ticket for me."

"Good dog? eh? up to his work?" asked Joe.

"Capital— the best water-dog I ever saw. An astonishing diver," said Grimsby, patting Lion on his sore back.

"All right? then come along."

Grimsby waddled after his host with a heavy fowl-gun on his shoulder, and got on pretty well until he had to wade through two

feet of water and one of mud to the boat which lay off the hard about some thirty yards. He would have slipped down, had not one of the sailors tumbled out, and assisted him on board. "All right?" said Joe. "Ay, ay, sir." "Then up sails, and away she goes."

And so he did, much to Grimsby's alarm; for a smart breeze was blowing, and there was a good deal of motion in the little cutter, which made him feel rather queer, until Joe Wilkins administered a dose of Cognac, and recommended a short pipe, which Damon, from previous experience, was not rash enough to refuse. Lion seemed to be very queer, and crouched under his master's feet, looking at him with his one eye as inquisitively as if he wished to know the meaning of all these extraordinary proceedings.

Joe whiled away the time by telling a series of miraculous stories about the wonderful number of fowl killed by gentlemen who had come down and stopped at his house and put themselves under his guidance. He pointed out several spots where miraculous bags had

been filled, and succeeded in easing his hearer of his fears, and filling him with hopes of becoming a most experienced wild-fowl shooter.

As the little boat flew before the wind down the river towards "the Main," as the open sea is called, numerous flocks of sea-birds were seen wheeling about, but all too far off for the shooters to reach them. At length, a fine flock of widgeon, after making numerous gyrations, settled within sixty yards of the boat.

"Now, then," said Joe, "lean your gun over the side, and when I say 'Pull,' pull—Pull!"

Grimsby did pull, and down he went flat on his back. The gun was heavily charged, and kicked him frightfully. "Heigh over, there," said Joe, not looking at his guest, but at the wounded birds,—"heigh over—go fetch them!" He turned to see why Lion did not obey, and was surprised to find his master flat on the deck, and Lion overboard on the opposite side to the birds, swimming for the shore as hard as he could.

"I thought you said that poodle thing was a capital dog," said Joe.

"And so he is," said Grimsby, as he rose by the aid of a man and a boy. "Just you see Lion in a pond with a bung—won't he fetch it out?"

"Bung be——! 'Bout ship—out with the boat, Jem, and pick up the birds."

Only three could be recovered without the aid of a dog, for the wounded ones dived and scrambled away, so that the man in the boat could not take them. However, the guns were loaded again, the cutter's head put round, and after some hours' sailing another flock was seen on the water. Silently they approached them, and when they were nigh enough Joe whispered, "Pull." *He* did pull —but Grimsby could not muster courage— he confessed that one kick was enough for him, and resigned his gun to the mate for the rest of the day.

Several birds were killed, and many more wounded, which would have been recovered had Lion not received a false character from

master. About three o'clock an excel-
t mess of hot soup made Grimsby very
nfortable, and half a dozen glasses of hot
og, with the same number of pipes, made
m courageous. He actually promised to go
to the small boat by himself, and lay up
a favourite creek for "the flight" of a
owd of wild geese that always passed over
s mouth for their feeding-ground just before
sk. Joe was to leave him there, and run
ith the cutter a little higher up the river, so
s to have a shot at them after Grimsby had
one with them.

Fancy, reader, Mr. Damon Grimsby in a
ery small boat, with a very large gun in his
and, a long grog-bottle by his side, and a
hort pipe in his mouth, anchored by a grap-
el off the mouth of a creek, and dressed as I
ave endeavoured to describe him. Fancy his
itting there for some half hour in the gloom
f a winter's evening, waiting for a flock of
ild geese, and puffing away, and applying to
s bottle to make the time appear less tedi-
s. All of a sudden he hears a most extra-
dinary noise—a sort of whistle and whirrh:

—he looks up, and sees some opaque body going over his head. He puts up his gun and pulls, and down comes something *flop* into the water not far off him. He has shot a wild goose—the only thing he has killed that day, and in spite of all dangers he is resolved to bag him.

He pulls up his grapnel, seizes the sculls, and away he goes—he nears his object—he gives a very hard pull—out flies the scull from his hand and goes overboard. A wave takes the other, and overboard that goes too. Grimsby seizes the boathook—gives a violent push—for he is close upon his game—and leaves the hook sticking in the mud.

Blow, breezes, blow! the stream runs fast;

and out goes Mr. Grimsby to sea, leaving his wild goose floating by his side, just out of his reach.

Did Damon shout, scream, shriek for aid? Not he. He was not aware of his danger; he was only intent upon his wild goose chase, and hoped that the stream would bring the bird—a remarkably fine one, as he thought—

within his reach. Side by side they go—on —on—on—until the shades of evening close o'er them; and Mr. Grimsby begins to think it more than two to one that he shall never get possession of his bird.

But we must return to Joe Winkles and the cutter. After he heard Mr. Grimsby's shot, he looked out, and "the flight" came directly over him. He waited until they had passed him a little way, and then "let fly." Such a fluttering and screaming followed as assured him he had done great execution; and having no dog with him, he was engaged for nearly an hour in picking up as many as he could find dead.

"Now then, Tom, go about, and let us pick up that stupid cockney."

Tom, the mate, went about, and soon arrived at the mouth of the creek. Nothing was to be seen, though they sailed right over the spot where the boat had been moored. "Hillioh—hillioh—hillioh—oh—oh!"

No answer was returned.

"He can never have been fool enough to

cast off his grapnel and row after us?" said Joe.

Tom could not say how great a fool he might have been; but, by his master's orders, sailed about in all directions, hilliohing at the top of his voice until he gave it up as a bad job; and the cutter let go her anchor, made everything snug, and master and man turned in to wait for daylight.

Morning came, and with it "early flight." That is, ye uninitiated! the return of the wild fowl from their feeding grounds to the Main. Joe Winkles was ready for it—had a glorious blaze into a large flock, and picked up a score of them. He then ordered every sail to be set, and every reef to be shaken out—had his breakfast, and put out to sea to look after his cockney guest.

Squallton saw the little cutter return that evening with its crew, and some thirty fowl on board of her; but no Damon Grimsby. A one-eyed poodle sat upon the hard, and, as soon as the vessel approached it, leaped on board; but there was no master there to pat his curly pate. He sulked—refused his food

—watched the river day and night, and would have died a watchman had not Joe Winkles tied him up and drenched him.

Where was Grimsby? No one knew. Joe wrote to the traveller. The traveller wrote to Jerry Worsem. Jerry, in as gentle a way as he could, communicated the sad news to Mrs. Langsworthy, and Mrs. Langsworthy, not doubting that the wilful tempting of Providence had proved fatal to her kind good master, ordered a suit of mourning, and put an advertisement in the papers:—here it is:—

"Lost, stolen, or strayed—A respectable middle-aged gentleman, dressed in an outlandish dress, who went to sea from the port of Squallton in pursuit of a wild goose. Whoever will bring him, or any tidings of him, to his disconsolate housekeeper, shall be handsomely rewarded."

No tidings came. The reward was never claimed. Grimsby's dearest friend—the man to whom he had sent the leash of partridges so foully killed, sitting—came down and examined his papers. He found a will,

leaving Mrs. Langsworthy everything but five guineas for a mourning ring for himself. No such person as Mrs. Langsworthy was to be found within six months after Grimsby's disappearance; but there was a Mrs. Jerry Worsem, very, very like her, who took great pains in fattening and fondling a one-eyed poodle, who bore the name of Lion.

MORAL.

Ye cockney sportsmen! beware of a wild goose chase.

CHAPTER XII.

FROST FOR A FORTNIGHT.

Now is the winter of our discontent.
SHAKSPEARE.

"Waiter, coffee for two, immediately. I must retire early, Briggs, for I'm off to-morrow morning;" said Mr. Barnsley Birds-eye, a fat, squabby, middle-aged gentleman, with a bees'-wax coloured face, and a pair of small, twinkling, gray eyes. "The train starts at twelve precisely—confounded early, ain't it?—getting up in the middle of the night I never did like."

"Why don't you put it off till morning then?" asked Tom Briggs, his intimate friend, a brother briefless barrister.

"Morning? I mean morning—twelve

o'clock at noon: but then one must get up in the dark to shave, breakfast, and all that sort of thing—confounded early, eh?"

"Where are you going then?" inquired Briggs.

"Coursing," said Birdseye.

"Coursing!—you! a man that was never out of London in his life, except when he kept terms at Cambridge, to talk of going coursing! You never can mean it."

"Don't I though? 'Cry havoc, and let slip the dogs;' that's my motto. I am disgusted with having nothing to do. Sporting, like avarice, is a gentlemanly vice. So I went to Tattersall's a month ago, and bought a kennel of crack dogs, and am admitted a member of the Puddenwell Coursing Club; P.C.C. on our buttons."

"Which might be interpreted, in your case, to mean—if you will only put a P for a C—*pour prendre congé* of your senses. What do you know about a greyhound? Can you feed him, and train him, and physic him, and all that? Where's your manor well stocked with hares, eh?" said Briggs.

"Club coursers never have manors," said Birdseye. "They don't want them. Some munificent preserver puts his hares at their disposal, and as for training, feeding, and physicing, I bought the fellow that has been used to that sort of thing with the dogs, and infernal cheap he was knocked down to me—only £50 a year—£20 for every match I win, and two suits of livery, and a horse for his own riding."

"And where is your kennel?" asked Briggs.

"On Hampstead Heath—confounded comfortable and convenient," said Birdseye; "I ride there every day."

"Well, there's some sense in that; you have an object in view, and horse exercise is —"

"Horse exercise? — you don't suppose I go crawling about on a pig's-skin saddle? Not I — I take the omnibus—there is some bumping to be got out of that. Besides, I'm no rider, and hate being spilt," said Birdseye.

"Humph!" coughed Briggs. "How will

you do when you get into the field — run on foot? You're rather *inclined* to be stout."

"Hang me, if I am!—my inclinations are all the other way; but I am confounded fat, and not fond of running. I mean to ride about in a post-chaise."

Briggs laughed at the notion. "I wonder you had not taken to shooting instead; it's quite as amusing, and not half so expensive."

"Hang the expense! Haven't I got an income? Ain't I a confounded he-spinster? Except my dinners and wines at this Club, and the rent of my chambers in Clement's Inn, what have I to be spending money upon? Shooting, indeed! every fool with forty pounds a year can afford that. What expense is it? You can buy a bran-new double percussion-gun, with case, cleaning rod, and all complete, warranted to last a month with care, for five pounds, and a pointer —stolen, of course — and warranted to back, stand, and down charge, for a sovereign: and then look at the confounded labour—you must do the shooting yourself; now in coursing, the dogs do it all for you," said Birdseye.

"Then I suppose you mean to leave London, buy or hire a snug box on the downs, and set up country gentleman," said Briggs.

"No, hang me if I do! I hate the country. London is the only place for a man of sense to live in. I can stand a village for two days, if there's a pleasant party of London men in it, but not longer. That's why I joined the P.C.C.; only sixty miles by rail—two hours' work—meet at a snug inn, with a confounded good cook, and sit down to dinner with a select party of real gentlemen. The expense ensures that; subscription, £50; ditto for stakes, £100; and £5 a day for lodging and eating; I think that must make it confounded select, eh?"

"Then there's the kennel, and the trainer, and the keep of the dogs, and the dogs themselves, and the taxes, and other little matters, all *extras*, eh?" asked Briggs.

"Of course," said Birdseye; "and travelling, and all that: that makes it so confounded gentlemanly."

"And expensive," said Briggs; "but I

wish you would drop that foolish custom of saying 'confounded' every five minutes."

"Hang me, if I do! Where's the harm in it? It is so confounded expressive. Here, waiter! another cup of coffee; the last was confounded bad. You saw the effect of it then? The waiter could not doubt my meaning then, eh? But never mind that. I hate travelling and travelling alone. If you will go down to Puddenwell with me, I'll frank you, and introduce you to all the club the moment I know them myself—so come, say yes, like a good fellow."

"I cannot, if I felt inclined, which I do not, as I am no sportsman, and only know a greyhound from other dogs from its having a long slim tail. I am engaged every night."

"Ay, I know; Miss Kitty Swallowly, eh? It will be a confounded match—worse than a coursing match: you may double, and twist, and turn, but you'll be caught at last, and tied up, Tom—you will, indeed; better come with me, take a seat in my yellow, and see my dogs run."

Tom Briggs was firm, and said that "Much as he disliked marriage, he hated the notion of seeing a great long dog running down a little timid hare much more."

"Well, good night, then, Tom. We meet here at dinner on Saturday, and you shall have a confounded description of all our fun."

So saying, the friends parted, and sought their respective chambers.

In the morning, Barnsley Birdseye was awakened, according to his own orders, at nine o'clock. He opened his eyes, called his servant a confounded fool, turned round in his bed, grunted, and went to sleep again. At ten o'clock, ditto repeated. At eleven, his usual hour of rising, he awoke of his own accord, called his servant a confounded fool for not having insisted on his rising—could not shave for agitation—swallowed his breakfast so fast that he nearly choked himself, and sent out for a cab.

When its arrival was announced, Birdseye had so many things to think about — boots, breeches, gloves, and whips, and a book to amuse him on the road, orders for his news-

papers to be sent to him, and so on—which ought to have been done before; that it wanted but fifteen minutes to twelve when he entered the cab without one half of the things he wanted.

"Never mind—lots of time—drive fast, cabby, and earn an extra shilling. Go it a confounded pace. Paddington station."

Away went the cabman, taking the nearest cut; but, as fate would have it, in a narrow street near to the Seven Dials, he came to a lock; was fairly jammed in between a dray and a mud-cart, the drivers of which refused to make way, until a policeman came up, and insisted upon their removal. On—on—on, at a fearful pace they rattled.

"He will do it yet—five minutes good. Go it, cabby!" shouted Birdseye, full of excitement. "You are a confounded good driver."

The horse and his driver did all that man and horse could do. Despising the screams of old women and children, they dashed on, and arrived at the station just in time—to hear the whistle of the departing train.

"There's your confounded fare; you earnt it like a man. But what am I to do?" said Birdseye.

"Another train at two, sir; where are you for?" civilly asked a porter.

"Downham station," said Birdseye.

"Don't stop there, sir. Going coursing, I presume. All the gents and dogs went by this train, sir. No other train stops there before the five down."

"That'll do; I shall get down by seven. But what can I do to kill five confounded hours? I'll go back again. Where's my cabman, eh?"

"There he goes as hard as he can, just outside the gates, sir. He's got a capital horse," said the porter.

"Capital. What a pace we did come at! —a confounded pace! But where's my dressing-case, eh?" said Birdseye.

"You never gave *me* nothing but this carpet-bag, sir."

"I see it—he's off with it. Goodbye to my five-and-twenty pound silver-mounted dressing-case. But I won't be done so. Here,

take my bag, and keep it till I come back. Call a cab; I'll chase him."

The porter did as he was ordered. Birdseye explained the matter to the new cabman, and away they went; but, after a rapid gallop of half an hour, they gave up the chase in despair.

"Never mind. Drive me to my confounded Club—the Parthenon. I'll read the papers, and eat a chop."

Birdseye was hungry, for he had made a bad breakfast. He enjoyed the first chop so much, that he ordered a second. Just as it was placed on the table, Tom Briggs came into the coffee-room.

"Ah, Barnsley, my dear fellow. Given up the meeting, eh? Quite right—it's going to be frosty—snows a little now," said Tom.

"Well, what does that matter? Make the ground harder for the dogs' feet. They'll be able to see the hares better in a confounded snow. I'm off by the five o'clock train."

"I thought you were to start at twelve," said Briggs.

"So I was—got too late by two minutes;

and I say, Tom, just see after my dressing-case, will you?—advertise—five pounds reward, of no use to any one but the owner, you understand. It cost me five-and-twenty."

Tom Briggs undertook to try for its recovery; and, having taken down the description of it in writing, asked his friend what he had done with his dogs.

"Hang me," said Birdseye, looking bewildered, "hang me, if ever I thought about the confounded greyhounds; but they are all right—Slipsby's a capital fellow, and used to the sort of thing—he's at Puddenwell by this time."

Briggs was obliged to go away, as he was engaged to go shopping with Kitty Swallowly. Birdseye, to pass away the time, had an extra half pint of house sherry, and a nap over the papers. Determined not to be behind again, he started for Paddington at three, and found that he had an hour and forty minutes to wait for the train's starting. How he got through the time he can't tell even now, but he believes he went to sleep over the fire.

"Now, sir, got your ticket? first bell's a

ringing," screamed a porter—not his friend of the morning, who was off duty.

"Hang me, if I have!" said Birdseye, bolting out of the waiting-room; "here, a confounded first-class ticket to Downham station."

"Now, sir, look sharp—this way, if you please, mind the barrows."

"All right now," said Barnsley, wrapping his cloak about him, and trying to see his fellow-travellers' faces by the light of the lamp fixed in the roof of the carriage. He could just see enough to convince him that there was nobody there whom he knew, so he curled himself up in his corner, and went to sleep.

"Now, sir, Down—ham: here you are," said the guard; "any luggage, sir?"

"Yes; a red carpet-bag, with a brass plate on it," said Birdseye.

"No passenger-luggage for Downham," said the conductor; "nothing to come out but two baskets of fish that ought to have come by the twelve down, and a barrel of oysters for sauce."

"All I can say is I gave it to a confounded porter at Paddington this morning, and it ought to be here," said Birdseye. "I insist upon every carriage being searched."

"Can't, really, sir—we are one minute and fifteen seconds late now, and if we are not at Swindon when we are due, we shall all be fined. I'll send up for it by the next train. Go on!"

Whirrh! whir-r-r-h! went the whistle, and Mr. Barnsley Birdseye found himself on a platform, all alone: nay, there was a policeman near him, who politely showed him, at his request, to the Railway Tavern.

"Dreadful cold and snowy, sir. Frost set in for a fortnight, I think," said the policeman.

"Well, it really is confounded cold—I did not think of it before. I want to go to Puddenwell. How far is it from this?"

"They will tell you at the tavern, sir; good night."

Mr. Birdseye's London boots were wet through when he arrived at the tavern; he was glad to sit down and dry them before the fire.

"Chaise and pair on to Puddenwell, and a cup of coffee, and a confounded round of toast while it is getting ready — how far, eh?"

"We haven't got no coffee in the house, and it's eleven miles and a half over the worst country in England, and all the chaises and horses are out," said the landlord; "all gone to Puddenwell; it's the great coursing meeting, you know."

"I do know it. I am a member of the club; I must be there to-night."

"Well, the horses and chaises will soon be back—some of them. The last went away with a gentleman's servant and dogs, who expected their master was in the twelve down—but he warn't," said the landlord.

"Did you hear the name?" said Barnsley.

"Yes, I did; let me see, it was something about baccy — Virginny? — no; Oronoko? — no; short-cut? — shag? — returns? no — well——"

"Was it Birdseye?"

"That's it—Birdseye's the boy."

"And I am the man," said Barnsley.

"Send out for some confounded coffee, if you have none in the house."

"And where am I to send to? We have not a shop within three miles of us. Try a little warm beer with a little gin and ginger in it; it is a fine thing to keep the cold out, and you will want something on the downs between this and Puddenwell."

Birdseye never tasted spirits, but he consented to the warmed ale and ginger, and found it very comforting.

"Here comes something," said the landlord, as the sound of wheels was heard. "You're in luck, sir; it's a Farminton shay with a passenger for the eight-o'clock up. The boy will take you on, as he has only come five miles."

The postboy was sent for, and the promise of half a sovereign for himself induced him to undertake to convey Mr. Birdseye to Puddenwell.

"Wrap up well, sir; you'll find it mortal cold over the hills; and here, Jem, put the gentleman a little litter into the shay to keep his feet warm," said the landlord.

Away went Mr. Birdseye, his body smothered in his cloak, and his feet in moist stable litter, which was more agreeable from its warmth than its perfume. The moon shone brightly; and, although the roads were rough, and the chaise not particularly easy, all went pretty well for the first five miles. They began to climb a long hill, and so steep was it that the horses were forced to stop now and then to recover their breath; Birdseye was tired of gazing out of window over the bleak downs, so he went to sleep in the corner. When he awoke, which he did from a violent jerk that nearly dislocated his neck, he found himself lying on his side, and a window just above his head.

"Lie quite still," said a voice. "I'll soon let you out. Now then, sir, step on the wheel and jump."

Birdseye obeyed, and found himself up to his knees in snow. The chaise was lying on its side in a ditch.

"Where are we? What a confounded spot!"

"It is, sir—and I don't know where we

are. We cannot be far from Puddenwell, however, so I will disengage the horses; you shall ride one and I the other, and we'll leave the shay where it is," said the postboy.

What was to be done? Barnsley Birdseye was afraid of riding on horseback, and so he told the boy, and said he would walk to the nearest farm, and stop there for the night.

"I only wish we could find one; but on these hills you may as well look for a needle as a farm, or even a barn. Cast your eyes round, and see if you can see anything but hills and snow, for I can't."

Birdseye looked—not a barn, not a tree, or even a bush was to be seen.

"Beautiful coursing country," said the boy.

"Confounded beautiful—but let us mount and get out of it," said Birdseye.

With the help of the boy, he scrambled into the saddle and followed his leader. He was greatly alarmed, and felt very uncomfortable; his feelings were not improved by finding himself unwell too: he was sick and queer, which he attributed to the fresh ale he had

taken. He trotted manfully on, however, and progressed rapidly and safely until his horse made a trip, and he was shot off over his head. The snow was a soft bed enough; he was not hurt, so he mounted again as soon as he had shaken the snow off his cloak.

"We are all right—I can see the tower of Puddenwell church—hurrah! get on, sir; I was afraid we must have slept on the downs."

The very notion of such a bed and such "snowy sheets" induced Birdseye to put his horse along. In about an hour's time, for they had to wind round the hills, they entered the streets of Puddenwell, a little antiquated town, which, except at the period of the coursing meetings, never saw a stranger within it.

"Here we are, sir, thank the moon and stars!—it's worth a guinea, that it is, to come over those downs at night."

"And you shall have one, and a good supper, and a confounded bed to boot," said Mr. Birdseye.

"Thank you, sir; but I doubt if such a thing as a bed is to be had; I only hope you

wrote down and ordered one for yourself," said the boy. "This way, sir; the Club-room is up stairs."

Birdseye was left to himself in the passage, and was surprised to see no one about, and the passage lamp nearly out. He looked at his watch, and found it was twelve o'clock at night. He shouted, and his shouts brought a waiter. He inquired for the Club-room—said he was a member, and wanted a bed and his man Slipsby.

"Bless you, sir, the gentlemen members are all in bed long ago—the fires out, and we were just littering ourselves down for the night in the scullery. Every bed is engaged, servants' and all; but walk into the kitchen—there's a fire there, and I'll call master."

"Do, my good fellow, bring the landlord and a cup of coffee, and a confounded toast and an egg or two," said Birdseye, as he warmed himself before the kitchen-fire.

The landlord came, and, having asked the name of the new member, told him that his man, not having had a kennel engaged for him, as he expected to find, had taken the

dogs over to a farm-house about five miles off —the nearest place of accommodation he could hear of.

"Well, never mind—let me have coffee and something to eat, and a bed ——."

"The former you shall be served with in a few minutes, sir, but as to a bed—we are full—the whole town is full—you ought to have written a fortnight before the meeting, and insured a room here or lodgings elsewhere—my servants are all obliged to sleep on straw in the scullery, or sit up, which they please," said the landlord.

"I'll give a guinea for a bed—a confounded guinea," said Birdseye.

"That's the reg'lar charge, sir, at coursing meetings."

"Then I'll give two for a confounded bed —or three, if two won't do."

"That may be a temptation to others, but not to me, sir: here comes the waiter with the coffee and the ceteras; he shall go out and see what he can do in the town for you."

Before Mr. Birdseye had finished the coffee and the ceteras, the waiter returned to

say that a baker, a little below, for the consideration of the three guineas, would get up two hours before his time (he "set the dough" at two), and let the gentleman have his bed. The landlord supplied him with clean, well-aired sheets; and about one o'clock Mr. Birdseye congratulated himself on being in a confounded bed. He went off to sleep, having left orders with the waiter for Slipsby to attend him in the morning."

Mr. Birdseye woke up of his own accord. He did not know where he was at first, and when he recollected that he was in a baker's bed in the town of Puddenwell, he thought it not improbable that the strangeness of the place had caused him to wake before his usual time, especially as Slipsby had not been in to call him according to orders. He looked at his watch—it stood at half-past three. He had forgotten to wind it up. "Never mind," said he, "I am very tired; I'll have another confounded nap."

How long he slept he knew not; but, when he was awake again, he felt sure that the day must be far advanced. However, Slipsby had

not arrived, so he turned on his other side and tried to sleep again, but he could not. He got up, partly dressed himself, and threw on his great coat as a wrapping gown. He undrew the curtains of a little latticed window, and looked into the street. Nothing was to be seen but snow, and one post-chaise going along at a slow pace, with two gentlemen smothered in coats and shawls inside of it.

He opened the window, and looked up and down the street, first to the right, then to the left: he did not see a living soul, but he did see the tower of a fine old church, and on its face the dial of a clock, the hands of which pointed to the hour of 1 p.m.

"Where's a confounded bell?" screamed the astonished and annoyed Birdseye.

He sought at the side of the bed, behind the bed, looked in each of the corners, and near the fireplace, but no signs of a bell were to be seen.

"Hulloh! hulloh! below there; I suppose bakers never indulge in bells: hulloh!"

"What *is* the row, and who are *you?*"

id a boy with his face painted white, as if bout to play a ghost's part.

"Where's your confounded master?" said Birdseye.

"Confounded! I ain't got no confounded," replied the boy.

"Pooh! pooh! my good boy, I don't mean any harm—where is your master!"

"Gone out with the bread-cart."

"And where's your mistress?"

"We don't own one."

"Where's your confounded maid then?" shouted our poor friend, getting very cold and angry.

"We only possesses a chairwoman, and she's gone home to suckle the babby," said the boy.

"Hang the babby!—I wish it was choked! But look here, my lad—my good lad—just run to the inn ——"

"Which on 'em? there's two."

"Hang me, if I know the name of it, but it's where the confounded Club meets."

"We ain't no such Club of that name ere — nothing but a Coursing Club," said he boy.

"That's it — run there and ask for my servant — Mr. Birdseye's servant, Slipsby; and if he is not to be found, tell the landlord to send me a waiter, or a chambermaid, or a boots, or an ostler, or even a scullion-wench — and order a barber, and I'll give you half-a-crown."

"That's worth arning so easy," said the boy: "and if you'll come down and mind shop while I go, I'll be back in no time."

"Mind a confounded shop? I? I'll be hanged, if I do!" said Birdseye.

"Then, I can't wag out. Master's orders is very strict, and I ain't going to be larrupped when he comes home," said the boy.

"You won't be gone a moment—lock the door after you," said Birdseye.

"No—no—it won't do—a customer might come and find the door locked and go over to the opposition: you come and mind shop, and I'll arn that half-crown as you talked about."

"Oh, well! needs must when the ——, eh?—here I am. Cut along—be quick," said Birdseye, taking his place behind the counter

and rather relishing the joke than not; but the boy had not been out of the door more than a minute when a little girl opened it, and coming up to the counter stared frightfully at seeing a fat dark man in a dark great coat, and without any neckcloth, and seemed inclined to bolt.

"Well, my little dear, what is it?" said Barnsley, in as mild a tone, and in as insinuating a manner as he could, under the circumstances.

The child put one of her fingers into her mouth, and said, "Please, sir, mother wants a tuppenny buster."

"Of course—here, take it, my dear," replied Birdseye, quite bewildered, and handing her a half-gallon loaf.

"How remarkably big your busters is grown since yesterday!" said the child, laughing. "Now, please, sir, mother wants a penn'orth of beeswax and a soft-roed sojer."

Birdseye was fairly nonplussed, and shammed deaf, in order to make the child repeat the wishes of its mamma. She did so distinctly, but he could make nothing of it until

he bid her point out to him what it was she wanted. He then discovered that it was a piece of thin cheese, which certainly looked as hard as its nickname, and a red herring.

How much of the cheese went for a penny he did not know, but he cut off about half a pound, to the child's great delight, and bid her pick her own herring out a tub—for he could not think of handling it himself.

"Please, sir, mother will pay next time," said the child, as she left the shop grinning with delight.

"Oh, very well, my little dear, it's of no consequence," replied our fat friend, looking Anti-Poor-Law-Unionly.

Birdseye was rather amused at his first successful essay in trading, but hoped that his powers would not be further taxed. In this he was disappointed: the child spread such a report of the liberality displayed at the baker's shop, that in less than five minutes it was filled with customers—all wanting articles upon credit.

"Hang me," said Birdseye to himself, "hang me, if my landlord must not drive a

pretty brisk trade! but I wonder he trusts such a suspicious-looking lot. I won't sell any more till the boy returns, for I do not see any journal or day-book, or whatever they call it, to enter the debtors' names in."

When he announced his intention, the shop was speedily cleared, just as the boy returned with a waiter. Birdseye briefly explained what had passed, and was surprised to find that he had made himself responsible for the sum of twenty-one pence, as the child was the daughter of a good-for-nothing old woman, who never paid if she could help it. He paid the money at once, and gave the boy the promised half-crown, for liberality was one of his weaknesses.

"Step up stairs, waiter. My servant has not been over, I presume?"

"No, sir."

"I am surprised at that."

"I am not, sir; for, though we have not above a foot of snow down here, I dare say it is three or four feet deep on the hills."

"Just assist me to dress—get my boots cleaned, and all that sort of thing—be quick

about it, as I am anxious to join the Club," said Birdseye.

"Club, sir? Bless you, there is not one left to join. When they got up this morning, and saw the state of the weather, they all started at once. The last chaise left about a quarter of an hour ago," said the waiter.

"Where are they all gone to?"

"Home, sir; they know that when a frost like this sets in there is no chance of any coursing; and, as there is no other amusement to be had in the place, they start off, and come back again when the weather is open."

"Well, never mind; I suppose I can get a bed at your house, now, if I stop, and if not, I can get a chaise to Downham station?" said Birdseye inquiringly.

"Oh, certainly, sir; lots of beds *now*; but, as to chaises, you must wait until some of them come back, if they can get back."

"Is my carpet-bag come to hand?"

"No, sir; no carpet-bag in the Lion."

"Why, I left it at Paddington, and they promised to send it by the next train."

"So they may have done, sir. It may be

at Downham station; but, unless you left orders with them there to send a special messenger with it, you won't see it until you go there and ask for it. We have nothing running there regularly," said the waiter.

"Well, never mind for a day; we will send after it, if I make up my mind to stay—get me a fellow to shave me, and let me have breakfast ready as soon as my boots are cleaned."

"Jinks is gone his rounds, sir. As soon as he had shaved the Club, he started, and won't be home until nightfall," said the waiter; "but, if you can shave yourself, master will supply you with the needfuls; in short, sir, you had better go up to the Lion at once. You will have everything more comfortable there than in these very humble lodgings.",

Birdseye thought so too. He left word with the boy that his master should be sent up to him to receive his money on his return, and followed the waiter up to the Lion Inn.

After having made his toilet in a comfortable bedroom, with a good fire in it, Birdseye

was shown into the Club-room, where an excellent breakfast was prepared for him; indeed, so good was it, that, being exceedingly hungry, he thought he had never seen so good a breakfast in his life.

"Capital sausages, landlord."

"Yes, sir; the Squire's own making; he's famous for them, and always supplies the Club," replied the host.

"What magnificent black puddings!"

"Ain't they, sir? ain't to be equalled anywhere. The Squire always provides them."

"Splendid! and hang me, if ever I tasted such confounded spiced beef as this!" said Birdseye.

"'Tain't to be got nowhere else. The Squire sees to it himself," said the host.

"He must be a first rate man that, eh, landlord?"

"He is, sir; one of the old school, keeps open house, and is never so happy as when he sees his friends round him eating and drinking, and enjoying themselves."

"I should like to have made his acquaintance," said Birdseye.

"You may yet, sir, for, if he hears you are here, he will rob me of a customer, and put you into snug and comfortable quarters," said the host.

"If you had only been up to breakfast, you would have met him and several other gentlemen; but, as you arrived late, and your servant did not come, I would not allow you to be disturbed, especially as there was no chance of sport."

"Any chance of the post going?" asked Birdseye.

"I am afraid not, sir, at present; though, of course, it's uncertain. We lie high here, sir; I don't mean the town itself, but the country about us."

"Well, as I am here, I think I shall stay a day or two, and see how things turn out. By the by, let a special messenger be sent to Downham station for my carpet-bag, and another over to the farm, where my man Slipsby is with the dogs. Let me have a newspaper, and send a waiter to clear away."

"At what hour will you dine, sir, and what will you have for dinner?"

"Oh, about seven or half-past. I'll leave the dinner to you."

The landlord placed a paper, which one of the members had luckily left behind him, into the hands of Mr. Birdseye, and, having cleared away, left him to digest its contents. Having read it for some quarter of an hour, he winked and blinked, turned himself round on his sofa, and went fast asleep.

About four o'clock Birdseye awoke. He felt cold; and no wonder: his fire was nearly out. He rose and rang the bell. While the waiter was absent to fill the scuttle, he sidled to the window. He was annoyed to see that the snow was falling in large flakes too heavy to be tossed about here, there, and everywhere, as they are wont to be. They came down flop, flop, flop; one could *hear* them fall.

"This is very pleasant, certainly. I wish I was in town again. I ought to have taken Tom Briggs's advice. But never mind. The faster it falls, the sooner it will cease. We shall have a fine confounded thaw to-morrow."

The waiter, having made up the fire, re-

treated. M. Birdseye resumed his paper and his nap.

When he awoke again, he found the table drawn up close to the fire, and wax candles shedding a bright gleam on a very white tablecloth. The landlord entered, bearing a dish of stewed lampreys and a tureen of delicious mutton-broth.

"Confounded fine!" said Birdseye, as he tasted the broth.

"The Squire's receipt, sir; must be good."

"The very best lampreys I ever partook of, and so early."

"Yes, sir, the Squire has friends in Worcestershire."

Away went tureen and lamprey-dish, and on came a beautiful roasted rump of beef and a boiled sirloin.

"This is reversing the usual routine," said Birdseye. "We generally salt and boil our rumps, and roast our sirloins."

"It's the Squire's plan, sir."

"And he is confoundedly right. I've dined —hang me, if I have not *dined!*"

"Not yet, sir. You must taste the Squire's

pudding and his mince pies. A regular coursing pudding, sir; full of good things and plenty of suet, and such mince-meat you never tasted before. A year old, sir; lots of prunes and all manner of good things in it. None of your nasty aperient currants, and nothing else."

Could Birdseye refuse to taste the pudding and the pie, after such a recommendation? Not he.

"Confounded—by heaven! I shall be surfeited if I eat any more. Let what will happen, I am resolved to make the man who invented those my intimate friend. Take away: I may truly say—I have *dined*."

"Not yet, sir; you must try the Squire's cream cheese, and the real Sweetcombe watercresses; they are—"

"But I shall be ill; eh?"

"Never, sir; just try them."

"Splendid—confounded fine!" said Birdseye. "Now I *have* dined. Let me have a pint of sherry, and then a cup of coffee, and I shall require nothing else to-night."

"Sorry to say, sir, I have not a wine li-

cence. You can have spirits of any kind; but wine I dare not sell," said the landlord.

"But surely the Club drink wine?" asked our fat friend.

"Oh, certainly, sir; champagne, claret, and all that sort of thing; but they have their own cellar, and I have not got the key of it," said the host.

"Then what am I to do?"

"Try a little of the Squire's punch, sir. Whiskey or gin made very weak, with a little lemon-peel—"

"I never drink spirits in any shape or form," said Birdseye.

"Never mind; try the Squire's mixture for once; for there is, as he says, not a headache in a gallon of it; it all goes into the—that is, elsewhere—in the morning."

The landlord brought in a small jug of the liquid, in spite of Mr. Birdseye's negative shake of the head. He put a glass of it into his guest's hand.

"Hang me!" said Birdseye, "this is confounded—confounded good, and no mistake about it."

"I thought you would like it, sir; every body does."

"Like it, eh? confoundedly!"

Mr. Birdseye finished his jug, hoped he might be able to have a personal introduction to the inventive Squire, and retired to bed, after having ascertained that the special messengers sent after his carpet-bag and his man Slipsby had both returned without having been able to reach their destinations on account of the depth of the snow.

"Never mind," said our friend; "they'll turn up in the confounded morning."

Morning came, and with it a waiter to say that it had been snowing all night and freezing too.

"Never mind," said Birdseye; "let there be a good fire in the club-room; get me the same sort of breakfast I had yesterday, and the morning paper."

The waiter did not reply, but, having put his master's shaving things on the table, retreated.

Birdseye rose, shaved himself, looked anxiously at the colour of his shirt—his *only*

shirt—collar, and rushed down stairs. "I say, landlord, how is this? Where are the sausages, and the hog's puddings, and—"

"Sorry to say, sir, they are exhausted—eaten—gone—you had the last yesterday."

"But where is the morning paper?"

"The mail cannot travel, sir; all the roads are blocked up by the snow," said the landlord.

"What am I to do? I'll be off to town. Order me a postchaise."

"I am sorry to say, sir, if the mail can't travel, nothing else can. We're blocked up, sir."

"What, am I to be shut up in this confounded town without even a paper, eh? Is there a library?"

"If you send to our clergyman, he will lend you some books, sir, but we have no library."

"Well, send to him with my compliments, Mr. Barnsley Birdseye's compliments, and shall be glad of his company to dinner at *five*—mind, *five*—to-day; and in the meanwhile should be glad if he could lend me a book or two."

The landlord went out to execute the order, and in a few minutes returned to say that the clergyman was very ill, and was sorry to say that he had nothing but works on divinity to offer as a loan to the polite gentleman at the inn.

"Never mind—never mind—I will jog on somehow. Is Slipsby, my man, arrived?"

"No chance of it, I am afraid, sir; we're regularly blocked in by the snow," said the landlord, preparing to leave the room.

"Stop, stop! is there no confounded decent sort of man in the place that I can ask to dine with me?"

"No one, sir, I am sorry to say. Ours is a very poor place, and, except little tradespeople and labourers, we have nobody."

"Then you must dine with me yourself. I cannot go through a confounded day without books, newspapers, or company. Let us have a good dinner, and a repetition of that worthy Squire's whiskey punch."

The landlord made a low bow, and put as good a dinner as he could on the table. He

sat down to it with his guest, and made himself as agreeable as he could.

This lasted for five days, amidst snow—snow—snow; our fat friend having got through one of the five by lying in bed whilst his linen was submitted to the action of soap and water. On the sixth the landlord announced—and a very unpleasant announcement it was—that nothing was left in his larder.

"Never mind," said Birdseye; "send to the butcher's for a confounded fine leg of Southdown mutton. I can put up with that."

"Ah! sir—he's regularly cleaned out—killed and sold every thing—the snow, sir, the snow."

"Hang me!" said Birdseye, "what's to be done? Ham and eggs—bacon and eggs—any thing."

"Not an egg to be got, sir; and as to ham and bacon, we're bankrupts—in the Gazette, sir."

Poor Birdseye having nothing else to do, and having the prospect of starvation before him, unless he could survive on bread and cheese, he took to being ill.

It was a happy thought, for it put it into his head to send for a medical man, and he wondered he had not thought of it before.

"I am dying, landlord,—I feel it,—but send for a doctor, and let me be killed in a legitimate manner. I do not wish to be sat upon."

"I'm sorry to say, sir, Spints, our apothecary, left Puddenwell just before the snow set in, and has not been back since."

"Then what am I to do?"

"I can't say, sir—take to your bed and water-gruel: we have plenty of Embden groats in the house, and, as you have no change of linen here, and we have of sheets, I think it is the best plan I can recommend."

Birdseye took the advice given to him—took to his bed. At the end of a fortnight after his arrival, when he was reduced by two stone and a half from his original weight, the landlord of the Lion came in with joyful looks, to tell him that a rapid thaw had taken place during the night, and that they certainly would be able to course on the Monday following.

"Are the roads passable?" said Birdseye.

"Yes, sir; the mail-cart and the apothecary are arrived."

"Then order out a confounded post-chaise for the Downham Station immediately. Let me have my bill."

"The Secretary of the Club will furnish you with that, sir."

"Curse the Club! Let me only once get fairly out of this place, and if ever I——. Tell the confounded postboy I'll give him a guinea if he takes me safely to Downham station in time for the next up-train."

"And your carpet-bag, and your servant, and your dogs?" said the landlord.

"I shall stop the former, and, as to the latter, tell him to go up to Tattersall's as quick as he can with the greyhounds, for I shall have him and them knocked down together in one lot to the very first bidder."

"And the Squire, sir, and the sausages, and the hog's puddings, and the—"

"I will write to him for the recipes: but now, my dear Mr. Landlord, if you have a particle of feeling in your composition, get

me out of this confounded town as soon as you can: I'll stand godfather to your next boy, if you will."

There was no resisting this appeal. The chaise was brought to the door, and with a hop, skip, and a jump, poor Birdseye leaped into it. Away went the nags; and when they had cleared the town, he offered up a prayer as sincere as lips ever uttered that he might never see it again. As the chaise wended its way slowly up a long hill, several carts and carriages passed him; he let down the front glass to ask his driver the meaning of such a sight.

"The dogs, sir, and all the gents going back to Puddenwell. The frost is broken up, and they'll course to-morrow. Shall I turn back?"

"Not for the world," said Birdseye.

"Here comes the Squire, sir. It is all right, you may depend upon it."

"Drive on—drive on, or you will forfeit your confounded guinea," said Birdseye, as he passed a fine, hale, handsome-looking man, driving a powerful gray horse in a regular-built dog-cart.

He arrived safely at Downham station, recovered his carpet-bag, and took his seat in the first up-train.

"Now," said he, "for a confounded dinner at the Club with Tom Briggs, and to read up all the papers."

He got safe to his Club, asked the waiter if his friend was going to dine, and was told he rather thought not, for that he had not been to the Club since his marriage with Miss Kitty Swallowly, which took place at the set-in of the frost for a fortnight.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE CHRISTMAS LOG.

Whatever you do, always keep a *log*.
TOM CRINGLE.

"Now, don't go to sleep; you have not long to stay, and I'll tell you a series of queer stories that I have heard up in this my exalted situation. If you have a good memory, you can retain them and retail them. It is possible that you may prevail upon a publisher to put them in print: try it, my dear sir; I should rather like it than not. I am fond of notoriety and making a noise in the world.

"Now listen to the tale of 'The Christmas Log.'"

"What! no fun, of no kind?" asked Mr. Bartholomew Biggerton of a labouring man who was earning his daily proportion of three

shillings a week by cracking flints on the road. "No fun, of no kind, at Christmas?"

"Fun and full bellies is out o' fashion in these parts," replied old Tom Shoveller.

"What! no ringing of bells?"

"None. Parson's quarrelled with the ringers, locked up the belfry, and put the keys in his pocket. For fear they should pick the lock and have a jolly peel, he's cut off and carried away the bellropes."

"No singing of carols and hymns? no waking up people out of a nice sweet sleep at midnight, with fiddles and flutes and clarinets?"

"None," said Tom. "The singers was the ringers, and in course the ringers was the singers, and as the one's offended with parson so is t'other. If they wasn't allowed to ring, of course they wasn't going to sing, and so they've left the church for the public-house."

"And don't the little charity schoolboys come round with their Christmas pieces to show what improvements they have made?"

"We've got an infant school, a national school, and a 'dult school, but no charity school," said Tom; "and they never have any pieces of anything at Christmas, only a hot-cross bun apiece on Good Fridays."

"No coals given away—no blankets—no cloaks and bonnets—flannels and calicoes?"

"Nothing of the sort," said Tom, shaking his head; "but then we've plenty of —"

"What?" said Mr. Biggerton eagerly.

"Tracks," said Tom. "We've temperance tracks, and missionary tracks, and tracks for the times, and anti-corn-law tracks; in short, they're so liberal with them that the butter-shops now won't give nothing for waste-paper. Why should they when they gets it for nothing?"

"Tracts you mean," said Biggerton, laying an emphasis on the final *t*.

"Of course I does, and I says so," said Tom.

"But the Squire there, up at the Hall, he keeps Christmas, I suppose, mistletoe bough, and all that."

"Can't say whether he do or no. As to

mistletoe, he's mizzled from here, and we don't know what's come of him."

"What! left that fine mansion and park, and the deer, and all the rest of it?" asked Biggerton amazed.

"All — and all owing to the stoopid tenants. They grumbled at there being too much game, so he had it all destroyed, rose their rents in consequence, and, as I said before, mizzled out of the country, not having an inducement to continue in it, when all his sport was gone."

"I am glad of it," said Biggerton. "The excessive preservation of game is very hurtful to the farmer, injures the poor, and promotes poaching."

"And where's the harm of that?" said Tom. "I am very sorry, for my part, as the Squire gave in, and the farmers are fools for their pains. Many an honest shilling have I earned, and very easily too, for I could set a wire with any man—round as a hoop, and as strong as a cable; but now, it's all up. There is neither fun nor profit to be had;

there is not a hare or a pheasant within miles of us."

"I am glad of it—I say again, I am glad of it. You might earn a shilling or two, but then —"

"Ay, and have some fun too," said Tom.

"But you were always liable to have a mortal struggle with the keepers, and be sent to gaol if you were caught."

"And where's the harm of that, when a man's nearly starving?" asked Tom Shoveller. "It's a risk, I know, and I've run it many a time, and never been cotched, and if I had been, what then? I should have had a weather-tight roof over my head, and plenty to eat and drink; whereas, if I did not poach, I should, as I do now, stay at home and starve."

"But you could labour honestly to get your own living," said Biggerton, "or else apply to your parish."

"You said labour? Yes—at three shillings a week; and you said, 'apply to the parish.' No, no; no Unions for me; break a window

first, say I, and go to gaol. Much more respectable, and a good deal better feeding; just compare the living, that's all; look at the ounces, and you'll see the gaol is the most liberal allowance, and far more respectable when you comes out."

"I cannot understand that," said Biggerton.

"It's easy enough when you knows it," said Tom. "When a man goes into the Union, every body knows he's become disreputable and got no friends. All his sticks and duds is sold, and his wife and children goes in with him. They're stripped and washed, and dressed in the pauper's dress, and separated one from the other, and, if they should ever get out again, they've got to begin the world anew without a mag to begin it with, and the stamp of the Union upon them; whereas, if a man poaches, and is cotched at it, he is fined, and of course can't pay the fine, but takes it out of the county allowance. He's shut up, it's true, but his wife and family is not, and jogs along, by the help of their friends, until his term's

up, and he is let out with a few shillings in his pocket for travelling expenses. When he gets home, he finds all his tables and chairs and beds just where they were when he left them, and he goes to work again as if nothing had happened; for, rely on it, catching a hare or a partridge is no crime in the eyes of the farmer that employs him, unless he farms his own land and shoots."

"Well, well," said Bartholomew Biggerton, "I can't say I understand it; for I am only a cockney, but I dare say a trifle of money will be welcome."

"Werry," said Tom, as he transferred his hammer to his left hand, and held out his right for the proffered tip.

Mr. Biggerton dived into the depths of his waistcoat-pocket, and, after fumbling for some time, found a fourpenny piece, and placed it in the horny hand of the labourer.

"Humph!" said Tom, as he turned it over and over, and at last sent it spinning up into the air by a jerk of his thumb. "Humph! sixpence gets cruel small—been in the Union,

this one, and kept on skilly. It's shrunk nearly half."

"That never was a sixpence," said Biggerton, rather confusedly; "that's a joe—a fourpenny—and a very handy coin it is."

"Then mayhap your honour will let me take out the odd tuppence in beer," said Tom. "I have heard your honour has a capital tap."

Biggerton was rather annoyed; but he did not like to be thought stingy; and "your honour" had great charms for him. He walked into the gateway and up the gravel path of his cottage, and ordered his maid to bring out half a pint of ale to the poor flint-breaker.

"This cup's been in the Union too," said Tom; "or else the maid's made a mistake and brought the wrong one. I'm werry thirsty still, and shall break the flints all askew unless I wet both eyes."

Biggerton called the maid to fill the cup once more, and then retreated within doors to avoid all further claims on his generosity from his new acquaintance.

As he hung up his hat and great coat in the hall, he could not help hearing Tom Shoveller say to his maid-of-all-work, "The old file drinks something better than this himself, I'm thinking, or he would not look quite so plump. It's dear at a thank ye. Water's plentiful hereabouts."

Could Biggerton's ears deceive him? He heard the pauper—the earner of three shillings a week—criticizing his home-brewed, and his maid laughing at his criticisms.

However, it did not matter; he had got a grievance to dilate upon, and that to a well-to-do London tradesman, who had just given up business, and retired into the country to enjoy himself, was something worth having. He resolved to make the most of it.

"Margaret, my dearest," said he to his spouse, "there—look there—see that poor fellow upon whom I have just bestowed a trifle and a draught of our ale."

"Small beer, you mean, Bartlemy, love—small beer."

"Ale—table-ale, dearest—but I was going to say, when you interrupted me—that is a

philosopher—he prefers a prison to a Union workhouse, and sooner than eat the bread of charity works on the public roads for sixpence a day. There's a nobility about that man's character that deserves encouragement —where should we find a man in London to work at so cheap a rate?"

Mrs. Biggerton confessed that she did not know where the individual was to be found; and also confessed that the sum was very small, but thought it seemed adequate to the poor man's support; for he did not look so very thin, considering. She had no doubt that Christmas brought its comforts to him as well as to everybody else.

"Christmas! marm, comforts! would you believe it? The ringers are not allowed to ring, nor the singers to sing; the little school children have no pieces to show; and instead of blankets, coals, flannel, and calicoes, nothing is to be given away but tracts — nothing but tracts, marm, which even the butterman won't take off their hands for waste paper. Old England ain't no longer old England, and we've come into retirement

when there is nothing worth retiring for. But though the Squire has run away because the game's up with him, and the parson has locked up the belfry, and driven the singers from the singing gallery to the public-house, I see no reason why *we* should not keep up old customs, and have our Christmas log, and our Christmas fare as usual. What is the use of money, Mrs. B., unless we do some good with it, and enjoy ourselves, and make our poor neighbours merry?"

Mrs. Biggerton confessed that she could not see the use of it, unless it was devoted to the purposes suggested by her husband.

"Then, my lovey-dovey, having your consent, I will hold a little Christmas of our own quite in the olden style. I've got Hone's Every Day Book, and that tells us all about it. Ah, here it is—there's a pretty picture, Margaret — a religious play or mystery. We'll have a mystery, my lovey-dovey."

"We'll have no other masters or mistresses but ourselves, Bartlemy, as long as I've a voice in the matter—but go on; what next?"

"Mistletoe and holly, and all sorts of ever-

greens to hang up in the kitchen to kiss the maids under," said Biggerton.

"Nothing so improper shall be committed in *my* kitchen. We shall have the Society for the Suppression of Vice down upon us," said his spouse.

"And the yule log; we will have a monster; and I'll send out and order it at once," said Biggerton, as he rang the bell for the maid.

"Sally, go down to the carpenter's and order a yule log, the largest he's got."

"A what?" said Sally.

"A yule log, silly girl — a yule log — it's to be burnt, you know."

Sally looked as if she was thinking, and, after a few minutes, she took her finger from her forehead and asked—

"Hadn't I better order it at the grocer's—he's got the biggest?"

"No—no—do as I bid you, and make haste back," said Biggerton.

"Well, Bartlemy, and what else?" said his wife, when Sally had left the room.

"Roast beef and plum pudding, of course,

and mince pies, and snap-dragons—large jugs of ale, with spices of all sorts, and toast and pippins bobbing up and down in them; and then a bowl of punch and——"

"Dear me, it will be very expensive."

"Never mind the expense, just once in a year, lovey-dovey; we can afford it," said Biggerton, as he slapped his little fat thigh, on which his pocket rested.

"And who's to be invited to eat and drink all these nice things?"

"Why, let me see—first of all there's the parson—but no, I won't ask him, he has not called upon me, and——"

"Yes, once, Bartlemy; he called once."

"Ay—for his Easter dues and a subscription to some society. Besides, he has shut up the belfry, and crushed the Christmas carol-singers. I won't invite the parson. There's the doctor and his family—he seems a good sort of a chap, and called upon us the very day we arrived. He shall be asked, and his wife and all the children."

"And the attorney, Bartlemy, we must have the attorney, or it won't be respectable," said Mrs. Biggerton.

"Hang respectable, lovey-dovey; hang me, if I ever ask an attorney within my doors until I want to make my will. You know it's an authenticated fact that they charge thirteen and fourpence every time you ask them to take a bit or a sup; and if you demand their opinion of the beef, or the pudding, or the wine, they won't give it till they've had counsel's opinion upon it. No—no attorney for me. You may ask his wife, however, if you please."

"I certainly shall, Bartlemy, for she leads the fashions. Well, who else?"

"Why, all our tradespeople, lovey-dovey. We'll ask them all. These shall be our parlour party. And then, in the kitchen, we will have a dance, and music, and singing, and acting; and, in short, we'll have some fun. And next day the poor shan't be forgotten. We'll make soups and more puddings, and give away blankets and calico, and all sorts of comforts, hurrah!—how jolly they'll be! The poor are so very grateful," said Biggerton, as he jumped up from the carpet and flourished his hand over his head.

"But here comes Sally. Well, what does the carpenter say?"

"He says, sir, he hasn't got one as weighs above ten or eleven score, and that's not very fat; and, as for burning of them, they don't in these parts, they always scalds them," said Sally.

"I cannot understand this at all," said Biggerton, looking bewildered: "who ever heard of a yule log being fatted and weighed by the score and then scalded."

"There must be some mistake in the message; Sally an't over-sharp," said the lady.

"Just repeat, girl, the message you delivered to the carpenter," said Biggerton, with great suavity of manner and voice to encourage Sally.

"Why I went to him in the sawpit, and I said to him, said I, 'Please sir, master wants a whole hog, the largest you've got, and it's to be burnt;' and then he up and told me what I told you just now."

Mr. Bartholomew Biggerton looked first at his dear Margaret and then at Sally. There was a something so perfectly innocent of the

blunder she had made in the face of the latter, and such an appearance of pity for her ignorance on the countenance of the former, that it tickled his risibility wonderfully. He burst into a loud laugh, rubbed his legs and his little round arms, danced about the room, cried violently, and at last threw himself into his easy chair and roared until his face was nearly the colour of ultramarine.

"Loose his neckerchief, missus," screamed Sally. "He's in a fit—he'll be off in a moment—he's very short about the scrag end of his neck, and them as is such is liable to lepsies and plexies. Look how he's a turning colour; our blue bag's a fool to him."

Mrs. Biggerton was really alarmed. She tried to follow Sally's suggestions, and remove her husband's neckcloth, but he waved her off, sat up in his chair, drew out his pocket-handkerchief, and having buried his face within the folds of it, continued to laugh convulsively.

"He's no longer his own master, and he won't be long my master, if this goes on,"

said Sally; "I likes my place, however, and I'll try to save him for my own sake."

"Bartlemy, my dearest, do leave off laughing, you really will make yourself ill:—you'll have a headache, or burst a vessel, or do something shocking," said Mrs. Biggerton.

"Oh, that girl! that's what I call real country simplicity. Ah! ah! ah! the notion of her going to order a fat pig when I sent her for a log of wood! ah! ah! ah!—but where is she? I must explain it to her.—Sally, Sally, where are you?"

"Here I is," said Sally, "and here's the doctor, cotch'd him just as he was passing the door to go to see Mrs. Pibbs, as is down with the yellow glanders, and a boil on her liver."

Dr. Smallbones rushed in the moment the door was opened, lancet-case in hand, and called out for a bit of ribbon and a basin.

"Pooh! what nonsense!" said Biggerton—"I am all right, and Sally's a fool. I am all right, I tell you, and won't have my pulse pulled about by any man, merely because I

happen to laugh at an ignorant girl who don't know a log from a hog."

An explanation, of course, followed, and Sally joined in the laugh raised at her expense; but when she had arrived in her own lower regions she said, "Them Lundoners is precious fools! who ever heard of a block of wood being called a—a—whole hog—for hang me, if that was not what master called it."

In the mean while Mr. Biggerton apologized to the doctor for the unnecessary trouble he had given him, and offered him a fee, which the other declined. It was a favourable opportunity, however, to invite him, in person, with his wife and family to a Christmas dinner. The invitation was given and accepted; and, of course, a little explanation of the motives for the invite, and an enumeration of the parties to be included in it, followed.

"I shan't ask the parson," said Biggerton.

"And, if I may venture the question, why not? He is a good man, and much liked," said the doctor.

"He never called upon me but once, and

that was for his fees and a subscription. I paid him the former and declined the latter, and he's never been near me since."

"I think I can account for that," said the doctor. "He heard that you had said you liked him well enough in church, but never wanted to see him in your house again."

"And so I did—upon the same terms—that's all I meant; I hate being bothered for money; but to leave myself out of the question, I am not going to entertain a man who locks up the belfry and drives the ringers into the alehouse, and won't let them sing Christmas carols, and won't even let the little schoolboys come round with their Christmas pieces. No, no, none of *my* beef and pudding for him," said Biggerton.

"What *can* you mean?" said the Doctor, surprised.

"Just exactly what I say. I heard of it all not an hour ago."

"From whom?" asked Smallbones.

"From that poor half-starved creature there pulverizing pebbles into powder for sixpence a day," said Biggerton.

"What, Tom Shoveller, the most notorious scamp in the neighbourhood? His character is such that no one will employ him; but as for starving—pooh! pooh! my dear sir, if you want a hare or a tub of smuggled spirits, or even a — a — what we use in the surgery —a stiff one—Tom's your man; but as to believing any thing the rascal says, don't—that's all."

"Make me believe that a man who deals in game, and grog, and forwards the pursuit of science by robbing the graves of their dead, would work there for sixpence a day!—pooh! And if he tells lies about the parson, how is it the bells don't ring, and the people don't sing, and the boys don't bring their pieces—specimens of their callograffy—eh?"

"We have oculist's proofs and aurist's proofs of that," said Mrs. Biggerton; "for we haven't heard a ring or a sing, or seen even a copy of the bellman's verses."

"My dear madam, allow me to explain. The belfry is shut up because the tower is deemed unsafe. The singers took offence because an organ was erected, and they were

not allowed to have all the singing to themselves; so they left the church, not for the ale-house, but the meeting-house, and the sect they have joined does not patronize carolling. And as to the little boys, instead of being allowed to beg from door to door, taking lessons in juvenile mendicancy, they have a good dinner and sixpence apiece given them by the clergyman."

"Ahem!" coughed Barthomew and his wife.

"You see now, my dear sir, how that scamp, Tom Shoveller, has imposed upon you."

"I don't—I can't—of course I *cannot* doubt your word; but still, I—I—don't like that private sort of way of keeping Christmas. It is not what I have been used to in Bishopsgate. I miss the dustman, and the potboy, and the postman, and the ——; but, not to be tedious, I'll keep Christmas in my own way in my own house, and I won't invite the parson—he'll only be a drag on the wheels of fun."

The Doctor did not stop to argue the

matter, for he thought it would be useless; besides he had to attend to a patient for whom the parish paid him just fourpence three farthings *per annum*; but although he was paid so badly for her, he did not wish to *lose* her.

Well, the important day arrived. The invitations had been sent out, and all accepted, except by the lawyer's wife. The old folks were to come to dinner to the number of twenty, and the youngsters were to come to tea, to the number of thirty or forty.

"Now, Margaret, my lovey-dovey," said Mr. Biggerton, "cut a bustle. It's one o'clock, and we dine at three. The pudding's boiling, the beef a roasting, and the minces gone to the bakehouse. Sally has laid her cloth, and got the plates and dishes down before the fire, so now we'll decant the wine, get the plums picked for the dragon, and make the punch and the spiced ale."

For more than an hour and a half did Bartlemy and his lovey-dovey work away at drawing corks, picking raisins, and squeezing lemons: at last all was in readiness; and as

the hospitable couple looked upon their preparations, they felt certain that their labours would be appreciated, and that they should spend a very merry evening—a regular old Christmas specimen of joviality.

Mrs. Biggerton dressed herself; took a final look to see that the dinner was likely to be well-dressed too, and then sat down to receive her guests.

"Rat-tat-tat;" in they all came. Cloaks, clogs, coats, and comforters, were deposited in the little back room; and Biggerton shook hands with every body, wished them a happy Christmas, and laughed and rattled away until his mirth came to a station on the line of merriment; for he found that he was the only one that was saying a word, or indulging in a smile.

"Never mind," said he, "every body is very dull for ten minutes before dinner. Beef, pudding, and wine will set all that right. Here's Sally!—now then—don't stand upon ceremony. I'll take in Mrs. Smallbones."

A great deal of time was wasted before

each of the guests could ascertain and take the seats to which rank and station entitled him or her. Biggerton pushed one here, thrust another there, and begged and prayed of them all not to let the beef get cold. At last all were seated. Sally took off two very large covers, and disclosed a noble sirloin of beef, and two very large twin puddings.

"You see your dinner—no kickshaws—plain Christmas fare," said Biggerton, as he dug away at the joint, and sent beef enough for two to every one.

"No soup!" whispered the grocer's wife.

"No fish!!" said another.

"No jellies, nor blongmonges!!!" said a third; and all the three, who were nearly in the centre of the table, put the notes of admiration at the end of their remarks by turning up their eyes and noses.

All were silent except the giver of the feast, who took beef with himself, and wine with everybody else as fast as he could, and laughed, and talked, and joked until he was very nearly choked.

"Cursed dull people!—but they are too

busy eating and drinking to laugh. Just wait till after dinner; they'll be jolly enough over my old port."

As Biggerton said this to himself, he looked at his party, and, sure enough, he was justified in one part of his remark—a stiffer set were never seen in a Quaker's meeting.

"Come, come, this won't do—glasses round, while Sally removes the meat, and puts on the cheese. Come, doctor—come, gentlemen, look to the ladies right and left of you."

The gentlemen were, of course, ready to show their politeness; but, as the grocer's wife—who had a notion that the less she drank the better bred she should show herself—declined taking any more wine, all the rest felt bound to follow the example set them.

"Well, never mind," said Biggerton, "you shall try my ale—capital stuff!—real Scotch."

But none of the ladies drank beer, and the only bottle that was opened, for the host himself, who thought example better than precept, was not up.

"Flat as my company," said Biggerton. "Take away, Sally, and put on the sweets and glasses, while I put on the wine—there it is — sherry, real Amontellado; Madeira — undisputed London particular, and port that has never been in the doctor's hands—I beg pardon—in the wine-merchant's hands to be doctored."

"Ahem!" coughed the apothecary, and his wife bridled up.

"You mean spoilt," said Mrs. Biggerton, wishing to mend matters.

"Never mind — no offence meant, and, of course, can't be taken. Glasses round—fill to the brim — give you my old toast, 'All friends round St. Paul's, and a happy Christmas to them.' All charged — now then! Gentlemen, on your legs, if you please. Ladies, we won't trouble you. Now then—hip, hip, hip—hurrah!"

"Heavens!" said the grocer's wife, "what will he propose to do next? I am glad, however, the gentlemen were too genteel to join in that horrid noise."

"Excessive vulgar," replied her friend;

" but what can you expect from a city man ?"

" We had better retire early. He is putting his little hat on already," said a third.

" Come, come—fill again—no time to lose —recollect the little ones — we tea early on their account. Smallbones, you're a regular cork. Come, help the ladies," said Biggerton.

" No more—no more," said every lady, as she began to draw a glove, push back her chair a little, and look imploringly at the hostess.

" Oh ! don't go yet—we don't tea till six," said Mrs. Biggerton.

" Go ! I should think not, indeed—what ! only drink one toast and one glass of wine on Christmas day ! never heard of such a thing," said the host.

All the ladies, however, rose simultaneously, and Mrs. Biggerton was obliged to follow their example, though apparently very unwilling to do so; for the fact was, she enjoyed three or four glasses of wine after dinner, and rather dreaded an hour and a half

with a set of strange ladies who seemed so very dull and ceremonious.

"Stop a moment, lovey-dovey. This is my own house, and I won't break through old customs. You and I must drink one another's health — bumpers, my dear. Margaret, have you filled? Well, then, my dear —May the close of our married life be as happy as its commencement! — hip, hip, hurrah!"

"Bartlemy, my dear, your good health— may you be as happy as every good husband deserves to be!"

Mrs. Biggerton looked affectionately at her little man, slowly drained her Madeira, and then, to the consternation of the company, walked round to his chair, and gave him a hearty kiss.

"God bless you, my dear!" said Biggerton, fervently: "you may look, gentlemen and ladies, but it's a custom with us. We have done it for thirty Christmasses."

They retired, and Biggerton hoped to begin the evening and be really jolly; but he was disappointed. He pushed about the bottles

himself, but no one seconded their motion. He told funny stories, but nobody laughed at them. He tried the sentimental; but did not raise a single sigh of sympathy. He even offered to sing a song, but no one said "hear!" or seemed inclined to illicit his harmonic powers.

"I am afraid you don't like the wine, gentlemen," said Biggerton. "It is the best I have got, and was generally thought pretty good in Bishopsgate."

"It cannot be better," said Smallbones.

"Then why don't you drink it?" asked the host.

"Thank you, I have done very well: I seldom drink above two glasses," said the doctor.

"Nor I—nor I."

"What do you drink, then—grog?—order it in directly."

Everybody cried out that they never touched spirits.

"Well, what do you drink, then?" again asked the host, amazed to think that some half score respectable tradesmen in a little

country town declined wine and spirits in moderation.

"Tea," said Smallbones.

"Or coffee," said the grocer; "a little ginger beer or lemonade in summer."

"Why, you're teetotallers, then!" screamed Biggerton.

"Not exactly totallers, but members of a temperance society," said Smallbones.

"Hang me, if you should have come here if I had known it!" said Biggerton to himself, as he rose and rung the bell, and told Sally, on her entrance, to beg of her mistress to get tea as early as she possibly could.

While the bohea was being prepared, the poor host left the guests to their own entertainment—a very slow talk upon business matters and missionary meetings—while he discussed his pint of madeira, and wondered what he was to do with all the ale he had spiced and the punch he had prepared.

"Never mind," thought he. "The young ones won't be so squeamish as these old puts—they'll lower the punch-bowls, and what is left will do for the poor to-morrow."

Well, tea was announced, and with it the arrivals of a great many little ladies and gentlemen. The host, who was fond of young people, although he had none of his own, tried all he could to make them happy and comfortable. He handed a cup of tea to one, and pretended to drop it in his lap, and then toast to another, making believe that the plate burnt his fingers, joked with the overgrown boys about the mistletoe in the kitchen, and even hinted at a game of hunt the slipper; but not a smile could he extract from any one of them—they were all upon their best behaviour.

"Never mind! wait till they begin dancing, and card-playing, and snap-dragoning, and try the punch; their tongues will run fast enough then."

In this poor Bartlemy was fated to be disappointed: as soon as they had all "tea'd," as he and his spouse called it, he rang the bell—ordered every thing to be cleared away—the card-tables to be set for such as preferred a game at whist or speculation, or any other noisy fun, and the fiddlers to strike up in the

kitchen, which, being the largest room in the cottage, had been prepared for the ball-room. Sally bustled about, and, aided by the charwoman, soon announced every thing to be in readiness. Biggerton walked round the room, offering his card to all the old people, begging them to cut in, but they would as soon have accepted a challenge. They answered to a man, and a woman too, that they never touched a card.

"Do you dance, then?" said Mrs. Biggerton, much annoyed, for she loved and had anticipated a rubber.

"Not ourselves," said the grocer's wife; "but we think it an innocent amusement for young people, when conducted on proper principles."

"Come along, then, old lady," said the jolly host, catching hold of his wife's hand—"come along. We'll keep up our old custom, and open the ball with a country dance. Choose your partners, and follow me. Come, boys—come, you pretty little dears—tol-de-lol-lol."

"Excuse me," said Smallbones—"but—really——"

"Well, really what? out with it."

"Country dances are never danced in this country. We only know the quadrille."

"Oh, very well — very well — set them agoing, and I and my old woman will look on and serve out the punch."

"Excuse me, once more—but our young folks hereabouts take nothing but a little lemonade, or orangeade with the chill off," said the doctor.

Biggerton looked round at the youthful circle, and saw a confirmation of the unexpected assertion in every stately face. He was deeply disgusted.

"Where do you go to school?" said he to a great hulking boy who stood near him.

"I don't go to school at all, sir; I go to a diocesan seminary," replied the lout, turning up his nose as high as if he had just come home from Eton.

"Humbug!" said Biggerton to himself. "Well, go and amuse yourself in the best

way you can. I'll manufacture the lemonade —and if I do not make it sour enough to give you all the mulligrubs, may I be plagued with you again!"

A series of stately quadrilles were walked through by the young under the inspection of the old. No fun—no merriment—not even a look at the mistletoe bough which impended over them! In the midst of a most intricate passage of "The Lancers" in rushed the jolly host, who had brought back his good-humour with a glass or two of punch, with a large pie-dish full of raisins swimming in burning brandy.

"Now, then, young ones—here's a jolly dragon; snap away at him."

The only reply was a scream from the little ladies, and a wondering stare from the little gentlemen.

"Excuse me, once more," said Smallbones, "but we don't know this sort of preparation about here—let me blow it out—see how pale it makes the young ladies look." The doctor puffed and puffed until (Biggerton was de-

lighted to see it) he had singed his eyebrows, lashes, and whiskers flat with his face.

"Well, never mind, dance away, supper will be ready soon," said Mrs. Biggerton.

Ere another set had been walked through, Sally announced that supper was prepared in the dining-room.

Great justice was done to the solids by every body, but the spiced ale and the punch-bowl were shunned cautiously. In the midst of their eating, a loud scuffling noise was heard in the passage. What could it be?

"Make way there, make way," shouted Bartholomew, who had been at the punch again. "Make way, here comes the yule—the Christmas log."

And sure enough Sally and the charwoman were seen bringing in an immense piece of ashen tree, as much as they could carry between them.

"On with it—hurrah!—up the chimney, never mind; that's it—now it sparkles and crackles—hurrah! do take one glass, every body, just to sprinkle the yule log."

Biggerton forced himself through the crowd, pressing one and praying of another to oblige him by swallowing a tumbler of punch, but his exertions were of no avail. He could not get one to join him in his jovialities. "Well, then," said he, "I must sprinkle the yule log myself."

In the midst of the solemn silence that followed this announcement, a rushing, rattling sound was heard; then a violent agitation of fender, poker, tongs, and shovel.

"The log! the log!" screamed Sally. "It's come out upon the carpet, and the house is on fire."

"Fire, fire, fire!" screamed everybody; and in a few minutes the room was deserted by every one but Mr. Bartholomew Biggerton, who quietly rolled up his much respected log in the hearth-rug, and sat upon it when it was extinguished, laughing ready to burst his little fat sides.

"Never mind the carpet, Margaret, my lovey-dovey; I have driven away those totallers and their stiff-backed progenies; hurrah! —we have been gloomy enough to-day, but

we *will* be jolly to-morrow. Now, one more tumbler of punch, and then to bed."

The morrow came, and with it, at one o'clock, twenty aged paupers, ten of either sex. Soup—real good beef soup, with lots of onions, carrots, turnips, and herbs—and half a dozen good rich plum puddings, was the fare, followed by the spiced ale and the punch—the leavings of the day before. Biggerton and his wife helped the soup, carved the puddings, saw glasses and jugs put upon the table, and then left the party to enjoy themselves unchecked by their presence.

"They don't seem so *very* jolly," said Biggerton. "The ale is strong and the punch potent: they ought to be up by this time; I will go and have a peep at them."

"Do, Bartlemy, dear, and I will go with you. I like to look on grateful faces."

"Come along, lovey-dovey," said Biggerton, as he crept stealthily to the open door of the kitchen.

"The soup warn't so werry weak, considering," grumbled out an old crone.

"Considering of what?" asked another.

"As it was only the bones as the nobs left yesterday, biled down to a jelly."

"Bones, indeed — *beef* bones!" growled Tom Shoveller. "I happen to know it was made from the leg of a horse."

"I wish you could prove it," muttered nineteen voices in unison. "I wish you could prove it."

"So I can," said Tom Shoveller: "I sarched the copper, and among the bones I found this here."

Biggerton and his wife looked and saw, to their horror, Tom Shoveller produce from his pocket a large horse's shoe.

A groan burst from the lips of the grateful paupers, but, before it was ended, Tom Shoveller was on his back from a blow of his indignant entertainer.

"Hang me," said Biggerton, "if ever I attempt to keep Christmas in the country again!" He did not—he returned to Bishopsgate, and railed at totallers, diocesan-seminary-boys, and grateful paupers, over spiced ale and punch, "the very last Christmas-day as ever was."

CHAPTER XIV.

A LOST CHARACTER.

I worshipp'd thee, and find thee but a shade!
WORDSWORTH'S *Excursion.*

"Good by, my boy, and may God bless you! Here are two one pound notes for you. Spend them like a gentleman. Do not forget the advice I have given you, but, above all, recollect what I have said on the subject of choosing your friends, for on that depends materially your success in life. Good by."

These words were addressed to me by my kind father, on the day when he left me in the cloisters of——school, of which I had just been appointed a foundationer.

I received his farewell, and the nice crisp new notes, with mingled smiles and tears. The tears were shed at the thought of being

separated, for the first time, from my indulgent parent—the smiles were elicited by the notion of my being a boy of property.

Our parting had been witnessed by a good-looking lad, dressed in the school-costume, of about my own age. He had been very busy at whip-top close to us; and as soon as the rattle of the chaise in which my father was whirled away from me ceased to be heard, and I was gulping down, as I best might, a sort of choky knot that seemed to fill my throat, he came up to me, and, gazing at me as if he would read my character in my face, thus addressed me.

"Don't snivel—it ain't manly—and you've got lots of money. Here—I'll lend you my top—have a cut at him."

I told him, I was very much obliged to him, but did not feel disposed to play just then.

"Well, never mind; just let us lie down on the grass, and have a cozy confab. You shall tell me who you are, and all about your family, and I will put you up to all our school movements."

He threw his arm over my shoulder, and led me gently from the cloisters into the green, as the playground was called. It was a large square plot of ground, skirted on three sides by a raised mound of earth, the summit of which formed a broad terrace-walk. As we mounted the steps that led to this terrace, I saw a sort of alcove, in which sat an old woman surrounded by baskets and boys.

"I say, old fellow, that's Mother Clayton's," said my new friend.

"Well," said I.

"Well, cherries are just in—that's all."

"Are they? we have had them for nearly a month at home."

"I wish I was not stumped, I would treat you to a pound. They are such beauties—only just look at them."

I did; and they certainly looked very tempting, so I changed one of my notes, and bought a pound of them, at about double the price they were worth, to treat the friend who would have treated me if he had not been *stumped*—though what that meant I could only imagine.

We retired to a quiet spot, and lay down on the sloping bank, with the paper of cherries between us. My companion very good-naturedly pointed out to me the principal boys of the school, as they played at cricket in the middle of the green.

While I was looking at them, he made a series of vigorous attacks on the fruit. When the paper was nearly empty, he kindly hinted to me that it was customary at —— school for *fellows* who had tips to lend other *fellows* a portion of them until their fresh tips should arrive.

I was not so stupid as not to take so broad a hint; and, as I had no notion of not doing as the other "fellows" did, I was about to ask him how much he wanted, when another lad came up, not quite so big as my cherry-consuming friend, and said,

"What, Beccles, at your old trick again—sponging upon a new boy?"

Beccles looked daggers, and turned very pale.

"Come, sir, be off, or you shall feel the weight of this cricket-stump upon your back."

Beccles jumped up, and walked slowly away, muttering something about "not standing it any longer;" but, when he got to a certain distance, he hung a double cherry-stalk over his nose, like a pair of spectacles, and used a most insulting action, for which he was chased, run down, and severely beaten, by the lad who had interrupted our *tête-à-tête*.

When he had chastised Beccles to his heart's content he returned to me, and bidding me get up and take a stroll with him, locked his arm within mine, and walked with me for nearly an hour. In this time he managed to learn who I was, and whence I came, and to warn me against speaking to Beccles any more, as he was cut by the whole school, as a dirty, sneaking fellow. I also managed to learn that my kind companion's name was Davenport Brandome, that he was the son of a wealthy London solicitor, and that he was high up in the school.

From that day we became most intimate friends. He was highly esteemed by the masters and his schoolfellows, and, through his

kindness, I found most of the inconveniences and hardships of a public school much lighter than I should have found them, had I not been protected by so popular a lad.

I was very grateful to him for his exertions in my behalf; and when the holidays came, with my father's consent, I invited him to spend part of the vacation with me at our house, which was a few miles from London.

He came gladly, and thus our intimacy was cemented; for, to use the school phrase, "We knew one another at home." I frequently spent the Saturdays and Sundays, on which we were allowed to go out, at his house, and we were more like brothers than scions of different families.

For six years we were seldom apart, and concluded our school career together. We were at the head of the sixth form when we left—he for a snug appointment in a government office, which his father had procured for him through the then M.P. for Westminster: I for college, where I had been elected an exhibitioner in the room of Beccles, who was expelled in his first term, for having broken

open the desk, and abstracted the money, of the man with whom he chummed.

Though separated, we still corresponded with each other; and when my vacations enabled me to leave the university, our intimacy was renewed. I either paid a visit to him, or he to me. Our tastes were similar on most points—he was fond of theatricals and scientific pursuits, so was I. We visited the theatres, and attended lectures on chemistry and other sciences together, and, as we were both great readers, we joined our forces and purses in subscribing to the best libraries of the day.

The only material point in which our pursuits varied was, that I was fond of fishing and field-sports, of which he knew nothing, and indeed he held them in supreme contempt; which might have arisen from his inability to see a float or a fly on a river, a partridge in its flight, a hare sitting, or a five-barred gate in his way, from being what is called short-sighted. He would accompany me to stream and stubble-field, and, whilst I was killing trouts or partridges,

amuse himself with a book; and the only ill-natured remark he ever made about my fondness for such sports was, that " he wondered I could tire myself to death, and waste so much valuable time and shoe-leather in *vermin-catching*."

As to getting him upon my old steady pony, to have a canter after a pack of diminutive beagles that were kept in our neighbourhood, I never could do so but once, and then he rode over two of the best hounds, and tumbled poor old Dick into a chalk-pit, which, fortunately for both the horse and its rider, was not a very deep one, or they must have been killed. He was seriously alarmed at the accident, and, in spite of all my ridicule and all my entreaties, never could be persuaded to mount again.

When I had done all that was required of me at college, I left the university, and entered the profession for which I had been educated. My avocations took me some distance from town, which I seldom visited more than twice in the year. Still I kept up a correspondence with Brandome, and he came

to see me as often as he could absent himself from his office.

Even my marriage did not have the effect which such unions sometimes have, of causing me to renounce my bachelor friends. My first visitor after my honey-month was over, and I had returned to my Lares and Penates, was Davenport Brandome, and he stood responsible for the little errors of my first-born when he was taken to the font. I merely mention these facts to show the truly friendly footing on which we remained.

Davenport, though not a stingy or a mean man, was, what is sometimes called, close-fisted. He had a considerable income, which increased coequally with his length of servitude. Of this he never spent more than one-third, for he lived at home, and his sole extravagance, if such it might be called, was in buying books. He was a great frequenter of stalls, and very industrious in hunting out quaint and scarce works, with which his library was richly stored.

When his father died, he was put in possession of a sum of money, upon which he

might have retired had he chosen so to do; but he generously gave up a large portion of his inheritance to his mother, to be bestowed through her upon the education and establishment of his younger brothers and sisters. He removed, however, from his home, not because that home was made uncomfortable to him, but because he had filled his room with books, and wanted more space for those which daily increased upon his hands. Another reason was that his health was suffering from want of air and exercise, and the faculty—for he was alarmed and sought safety in a multitude of physicians—recommended him to take a house at Hampstead, and to walk to and fro daily.

There I found him, some twenty years after we had left school, comfortably settled, with a respectable old lady as a housekeeper, and there I expected to find him for twenty years to come—he seemed so very happy—so perfectly settled down for life.

In this expectation I was deceived. Davenport Brandome, who had never spoken to a woman in his life, except to exchange those courtesies which society demands of a man,

fell in love with a lady in Hampstead, with whom he met at a lecture on astronomy, and who was as book-struck and as sedentary in all her habits as himself, and knew as little of the world at large.

He proposed to her to unite their libraries and themselves. She consented, and they were married. To *his* great surprise, for he had made no inquiries on the subject, he found that she was worth £25,000 in her own right. As his office took him more from home than his bride liked, and their joint fortunes produced a much larger income than their mode of living required, he resigned his appointment on a retiring pension, and bought a beautiful little place in Wiltshire, where he immediately went to reside.

About a year after Brandome was settled in his new residence, he sent me a pressing invitation to run down and see him; indeed, so pressing that I could not refuse to accept it, although I was much engaged at the time.

"Put me down," said I to the coachman by whose side I was sitting, "at the gates of Fairleigh Lodge—you know it, I presume?"

"I know it well, sir; I leave no end of book-parcels there."

"Do you know its owner?"

"Can't say I do, except by sight and report. He's rather a queer one to look at, and goes rather slow, but he is a good sort of man, and well spoken of by the poor."

"Among the rich, then—the country gentlemen—he is not—"

"Oh yes, he is; only, you see, he never hunts, nor shoots, nor handles the ribbons, and, consequently, he ain't so much known as he might be. If I had his fortune, I'd keep something like a turn-out, instead of a pair of heavy coach-horses, as look as if they'd been fed on grains, and I'd give a slap-up party now and then, instead of a dinner for four, and turn out at ten. But you're a friend of hisn, and might give him a hint how to do things as they should be done."

I smiled to think how difficult it might be to bring Davenport Brandome's ideas of how things should be done to a par with my driver's. I said no more on the subject, however, but amused myself during the remainder

of the journey by speculating upon the manner in which my friend managed to amuse himself in the country.

"Here we are, and there is your friend," said the coachman; "you must confess he looks a bit of a Guy. Just twig his *tout-andsemble*."

I dismounted; and while the impudent coachman was extracting my portmanteau from the hind-boot, and I was shaking hands with Brandome, I examined his outward man. He certainly did look like a character, for he had endeavoured, though not successfully, to dress the country gentleman. He wore a broad-brimmed white beaver hat, a blue coat, half frock and half cutaway, a buff waistcoat, and a sea-green silk neckerchief. His nether man was clad in drab shorts, leather gaiters, and ankle boots. In his hand he carried a paddle or small hoe, instead of his usual ebony cane with a gold head, and in place of his gold eye-glass he had adopted a pair of silver-mounted spectacles. I could scarcely refrain laughing outright at my friend's personal appearance, for the coachman gave me a most

smile-provoking look in exchange for my half-crown tip. I succeeded, however, in preventing his seeing my risibility, by pretending to watch the coach out of sight.

"Well, what do you think of my taste in a country residence?" said he, as we stood on the lawn before his house.

"Excellent," said I, "nothing could be better."

It was a beautiful spot. The house stood on the side of a hill facing the south; below it was a rich valley, down the centre of which flowed a bright and sparkling brook, abounding in trout, and turning the wheel of a picturesque-looking corn-mill. A little below the mill was seen the tower of the village church, amidst a grove of lofty elms, and still farther on were seen the village itself, and some distant farm-houses dotted about in the landscape. Over the valley the eye took in a vast extent of down-country. Ridge rose over ridge, hill over hill, until, in the distance, the farthest range seemed to mingle with the very clouds. Above the house, to the north and east, the hill was thickly wooded,

and protected from the cold winds. The house itself was an ancient building of dark red brick, relieved at its corners by Bath stone, of which material the window-frames also and the balustrades on its top were constructed.

The interior was as comfortable as it possibly could be, and the furniture, which he had purchased of the former occupier, was ancient, and suited the style of the building.

I was introduced to Mrs. Brandome, whom we found seated in the library, which, indeed, was the room always occupied by them when they had no visiters, and, as I was regarded as an old friend rather than as a mere visiter, they had not thought it requisite to alter their usual mode of living on my account.

I was much pleased with the lady; for, although she was what is usually termed rather *blue*, she was cheerful, talked well upon common subjects, and seemed to look upon my old friend as the greatest man of this or any other age. The feeling seemed to be reciprocal, and it was really delightful to witness the looks of respect with which they regarded

each other. "So Davenport says," or "so Isabella thinks," appeared to be a verdict on every subject not to be set aside by any court of appeal.

A quiet hour's chat brought us to the time when it was necessary to prepare for dinner, which was announced by a huge bell, in a sort of lantern on the top of the building. As I was dressing, I saw two or three carriages drive up, and when I descended to the library, I was introduced to two country gentlemen and the vicar of the parish, who had come over, *sans cérémonie*, to meet me.

Our after-dinner talk was principally on politics and sporting matters, in which Brandome took no share; for, though he voted as, what was called, a tory, upon principle—or, perhaps, from old associations—he was no politician, and, as I have said before, looked upon all sorts of sporting as merely time wasted in destroying vermin. He was great, however, on county rates, county prisons, poor's-rates, and turnpike trusts, for he had been put upon the roll, and was a very active magistrate—in his own opinion. His neigh-

bours were sensible of his services, and respected him for the zeal with which he discharged his duties in all respects but one—he never could or would see the horrible crime of poaching in its true light. He had more than once refused to send a labourer with a large family to gaol for six months, for having wired a hare, or knocked down a pheasant at perch: he had even discharged his own gamekeeper for having broken the stock of his gun over a man's head whom he had caught *in ipso facto*, ferreting rabbits in the warren, when the rabbits, by usage, were the keeper's perquisites! Every one of his country friends expressed his surprise that so clever a man, so efficient a magistrate in other respects, should be so dull, so slow of comprehension — that was their favourite phrase — on this one point — this most momentous matter.

After dinner, while we were taking coffee in the library, I ventured to pump out of one of the country gentlemen, of whom I had made a friend by teaching him how to sniggle for eels with a needle and lobworm, the real

sentiments with which Brandome was regarded by his new associates.

"A very clever man, sir, a very clever man; very gentlemanly and obliging; a great acquisition to us all as a neighbour and a magistrate, but—"

"But what?" said I.

"He knows nothing of sporting. Would you believe it that the stream below is full of trout, and he has not thrown a fly, spun a minnow, or tried with a worm since here he has been. He has them netted! It's a fact."

"Abominable," said I, drawling the word out to allow the gentleman time to take a huge pinch of snuff and swallow his indignation.

"He even allows the miller's boy to set night-lines."

"Worse and worse," said I.

"Then there is not such partridge-shooting within miles as he has got, and you would scarcely believe that he allows his tenants to shoot, and winks at lark-trammelling."

"You do not say so?"

"It's a fact. As to pheasants, they run about like barn-door fowls, and he does not

know a cock from a hen, when they are on the wing."

"Wonderful ignorance."

"Yes, and he refuses to have his covers spiked, for fear of injuring some one or another. He won't have a head of game in two years. There will be nothing left for the foxes to feed upon."

"Are you pretty well off for foxes about here?" I inquired.

"Plenty, plenty, my good sir. The large wood above the house—Downside cover, as we call it—is a sure find. You may stand out on the lawn, in a summer's night, and see the little cubs playing about like so many kittens."

"And the poultry?"

"Impossible to keep a-head; but we subscribe and pay all losses to the farmers, every one of whom hunts, and many pay to the earth-stopping. It is a splendid fox cover; and to think that Mr. Brandome should not keep up game enough to feed them. However, he is an excellent man—a most worthy character—in all other respects."

From the other country gentleman, with whom I ingratiated myself by giving him a never-failing recipe for the cure of distemper in dogs, I heard a somewhat similar account, with this addition, that he had sent him over a brace of very superior terriers, as a present, and he had refused to accept of them, for fear they should chase some hares in the plantations, which had become so tame as to play about under the windows of the house.

By the vicar I was told that no man could be more respected than my friend would be, if he only consulted the feelings of his neighbours a little more, with respect to preserving game and punishing poachers; that he was kind and liberal to the poor, a good landlord to his tenants, and always studying to promote the comforts of the labourer. He subscribed liberally to all the charities in the county, supported a Sunday school, and gave away coals, blankets, and other comforts to the poor, with a most ungrudging hand.

I confess that, fond as I am of sporting "in all its branches," I thought, as I lay upon my pillow, that Brandome's virtues

were such as might excuse his indulging in the vices of not preserving game and not punishing poachers. I slept upon it, and my notions were unaltered in the morning.

I stayed some few days in Wiltshire, and by attending Davenport to justice-meetings, accompanying him in his calls upon his neighbours, and his visits to the farmers' houses and labourers' cottages, was fully satisfied that no man was more respected than he was. No one had a word to say against him, except that he was no sportsman. I really envied him, for it seldom falls to the lot of any man who has passed the greater portion of his life in London, to be appreciated as he was, when he undertakes the *rôle* of a country gentleman.

"What did Brandome know of farming, or gardening, or horse-keeping?" inquires some curious reader.

Nothing; but he hired a sensible bailiff, a clever horticulturalist, and a steady, experienced coachman. *Qui facit per alium, facit per se.* Consistently with this axiom, my friend was an excellent farmer, grew the best

pines in the county, and had as neat a turn-out, in the way of carriages and carriage-horses, as any private gentleman, who was not a sportsman, could desire.

I was rather surprised, the morning before I left Fairleigh Lodge, to hear a gun discharged under my bedroom window. I was still more surprised, when I threw up the sash, to find that the person who had fired the gun was my friend. I shouted to him, and he held up a tomtit by one leg, in reply to my shout. I was dressed, and hurried down stairs to inquire the meaning of such an extraordinary scene.

"What?" cried I, as I reached the lawn, and saw him ramming down another charge into a bran-new percussion single, "what!—actually shooting? I should as soon have expected to see you mounting a hunter as loading and firing off a gun."

Davenport Brandome smiled as he told me that he had been taking lessons of his new keeper in the art of shooting, because Mrs. Brandome had complained loudly of the damage done to her seeds and flower-beds by

the small birds. He owned that he really thought he should take the field next year against the partridges, as he felt that his want of knowledge in all field-sports caused him to be a little looked down upon by his neighbours.

I applauded his resolution.

"Why, for fishing," said he, "I have neither skill nor patience enough; for hunting, ever since that chalk-pit mishap, I have no courage; but in shooting, now that I have mounted a pair of spectacles, I think I may succeed—particularly as I have been studying the art of gunnery, and getting up the science of projectiles."

I smiled, and to give a sort of reason for my smiles, asked him if he had met with no mishap since he commenced *gunning*, as the Americans call it.

"I do not mind telling *you*," said he, "that I drilled a watering-pot, destroyed a cucumber-frame, and wounded the under-gardener in the leg; but then I was so intent on destroying a bum-barrelled tomtit, a greenfinch, and a tree-creeper, that I saw

nothing but them. However, I am more upon my guard now, and can shoot any thing sitting or standing still."

As the coach was expected up in a short time, I was obliged to hurry away without hearing any further explanations. I ate a hasty breakfast, took leave of my hostess, after promising to run down again before very long, and, accompanied by Davenport, walked over to meet the coach, from the box of which I bade him farewell.

It so happened that my engagements did not allow me to perform the promise which I had made to Mrs. Brandome for more than twelve months. In this interval, I had heard from and written to my old schoolfellow two or three times. The only letter which is worthy of notice was the one in which he gave me a brief account of the result of his first day's partridge-shooting, which, in fact, was his last. He had provided himself with a certificate, and every thing necessary for the campaign, but a pointer. This was kindly supplied by a country gentleman whom I had met at Fairleigh Lodge, who sent him over a

favourite old dog, being too happy to encourage any, the slightest, tendency to sporting in so good a neighbour.

Old Ponto was one of the best, if not *the* best, pointers in Wiltshire. "Sure and steady, and would stand for ever," as the keeper said. On the morning of the eventful first, Ponto pointed at the edge of half a land of beans, which were standing uncut on the side of a very steep bit of ground on the downs.

"To-ho! look out, sir," cried the keeper.

Brandome walked up nervous and agitated.

"Take it easy, sir,—the birds are running. Heigh in there, Ponto!"

Ponto did heigh in, and, by the motion of the beans, seemed to be drawing on the birds up the hill. Suddenly—whirrh!—up got a bird behind him.

"Mark!" shouted the keeper.

Brandome put his gun to his shoulder, and pulled just as the bird was above the beans. Bang! down did *not* come the partridge, but up went poor Ponto some two yards in the air, and fell dead upon the spot.

Brandome was dreadfully shocked, bade

the keeper bury the poor dog, and declined all further partridge-shooting, although the owner of Ponto spoke lightly of his fate, as a mere accident, and begged of him to take the choice of his kennel and perverse. He would not, and limited his sport to murdering tom-tits and greenfinches—as I thought.

Having a spare day or two, I resolved to run down and see my friend, though I had not time to apprize him of my intention. I knew I should be welcome, so I mounted the box by the side of the coachman, who had driven me down on my first visit to the Lodge.

In the course of our chat, he turned round to me, and, touching his hat, observed, that he thought I was the gentleman who was the friend of Squire Brandome's.

I said I was, of course.

"Sad business," said he.

"Very," said I; "but every body knew he was no sportsman."

"But to go for to shoot him!"

"It was unfortunate, certainly," I replied, thinking of poor old Ponto.

"Unfortunate! it was rascally, ungentlemanly! It's quite done him up with the county."

I got off the coach at the turnpike, and begged the man who kept the gate to carry my portmanteau to the house for me, across a couple of fields. He readily assented, and, as we walked along, I asked him how my friend was.

"Purty well in health, sir, but very low and moloncholic since that unfortunate business," replied the man.

"What, the shot—eh?"

"Yees—he'd better 'a let un alone—he'll never be the man he was again. It was never done by a *gentleman* in our parts before. Parson hain't a visited un sunce."

I thought it very hard of the Vicar that he should cut his Squire for shooting a pointer by mishap; but I said nothing further about it, and gave the man a trifle to drink my health, as he dropped my portmanteau at the hall-door. The butler opened it, and said he was very glad to see me, for master and mistress was very dull ever since that unfortunate—

"Shot?" said I.

"Exactly, sir,—I am glad you know all about it. Not a soul has called since, and they've never been out nowhere."

I found Davenport and his wife in the library. They welcomed me with evident pleasure. I sat down by the fire and chatted with them as on my first visit, but a weight seemed to hang over them that at last oppressed me. We sunk gradually into an ominous silence.

"Of course you have heard all about it," said Davenport, with a deep sigh. "Strange that such a thing should give offence to every body."

"I cannot understand why the destroying of a mere animal should cancel all former obligations, and make enemies of those who were once friends," said Mrs. Brandome.

"Pooh! pooh!" said I, "it was an unlucky shot, but never mind, I will set it all right to-morrow—say no more about it."

This reply seemed to cheer them; and, as I had a very good old dog at home, I had made up my mind to part with it to the gen-

tleman who owned, or rather had owned, poor Ponto, and thus relieve my friend of his difficulties.

In the morning I borrowed a pony to ride over on my errand of peace. I went to the stable-yard to mount him. In my way, I met the gardener, and, as I always talk to every body, I asked him about the pine-pits and melon-beds. He told me nothing could be going on better; that he should have more than enough to supply all the neighbourhood, but that he supposed no one would accept of them now.

"Why?" said I.

"That unfortunate shot! He'd better have stuck to tomtits and greenfinches!"

"Bah!" said I, as the gardener walked away.

"If you're agoing to Squire Lumpton's, you'd better leave our powny at gate," said the coachman, "or I'm blessed if you gets admittance."

"Why not?"

"Why ever sunce that unfortunate—"

"Shot—eh? Never mind—I am going to set that all to rights," said I, jumping on the pony's back.

"It arn't in mortal man to do it," I heard, as I quitted the yard.

Mr. Lumpton was at home, and when he got my card desired that I might be shown in. He received me very stiffly at first, but after awhile became very gracious. He asked how long I intended to stay in the country. I told him. He said he should be very happy to see me to dinner, and was only sorry he could not ask Mr. Davenport Brandome to meet me.

"But, after what has occurred," said he, looking awfully dignified, "you must be satisfied—for you are a sportsman—that it—is—absolutely—out—of—the—question."

"I came over," said I, "to explain that unlucky business, and to compensate you for your loss. I have an excellent old Spanish pointer—"

"Pointer? — compensate? — what *do* you mean? Nothing can compensate such a pro-

ceeding. I am very sorry—deeply grieved. I did not think that any man, calling himself a gentleman, could ever have shot—"

"It was a mere accident," shouted I.

"Accident! why he was seen to lean his gun on a gate, and take a deliberate aim before he fired."

"A mere exaggeration, sir. It was an accident that might have happened to any one."

"You will excuse me, sir, if I ring the bell and order your horse. I thought you had been more of a sportsman than to attempt to palliate, much less excuse, such a deed. Good morning, sir. I regret the loss of Mr. Brindome's friendship—for we always voted together—but, after such an act—however—good morning, sir."

I was too indignant to say a word more. I had a great mind, however, to ride back, after I had ridden half a mile, to call him out; but I thought that the man who could quarrel with a friend merely because he had committed canicide by mishap, was too con-

temptible a character to waste another serious thought upon.

I met the vicar as I returned, and he, too, looked rather shy at me at first, but, after a few minutes' chat, invited me into his house. I declined upon the plea of being pressed for time. He then expressed his regret that he had no chance of meeting me at his former friend's table.

"But," said he, "what can I do? If I speak to him, I shall be cut by the whole neighbourhood."

"Merely because he shot—"

"Certainly. In this county, it is an offence which is never forgiven. To think that a gentleman, the owner of so good a cover—so sure a find—should have shot a—"

"Good day, sir," said I. "I only hope next time we meet I may find you in a more charitable mood."

I galloped off, chafed in temper, and sorely irritated. In this mood I met the bailiff. He touched his hat to me as I pulled up.

"Well, John, are all your neighbours mad?" said I.

"Mad, sir? what do you mean?" replied John.

"They seem to me to have lost what little sense they had, and to have discarded your master because he shot a dog by mistake."

"It worn't a *dog*," said John, groaning.

"Not a dog?—what was it then?"

"It wur a vixen."

"Why your master shot old Ponto, the pointer; did he not?"

"Yes, sir, but that worn't nothing—*he shot a fox!*" replied John, looking as if his master had murdered a human being.

The murder, however, was out. Brandome had seen several of his pet pheasants carried off by what he thought was a dog with a very bushy tail. He got his gun, and laid up for it behind a gate by moonlight. The wind was in his face, and Mrs. Pug, not suspecting an enemy at hand, came trotting up. Bang! A fine vixen in cub lay weltering in her gore.

The proud gunner carried home his game in triumph, and boasted of his success. Alas!

the crime was never forgiven. Fairleigh Lodge was sold by public auction, and, as far as the county of Wilts was concerned, Davenport Brandome was a lost character.

CHAPTER XV.

THE FIRST MEET OF THE SEASON.

Oh! quit the chase, my dear Adonis,
Leave this gay but dang'rous scene;
Go sell your hunters, racers, ponies,
Give up your sporting magazine.
VENUS TO *one* OF HER LOVERS.

"If I *have* a prejudice, mamma, it is against an infernal *rap* at breakfast. Somebody has been tormenting our knocker for these ten minutes, and not one of our domestics is industrious enough to answer the individual, who must be wearied out with exercising his thumb and forefinger.

"Don't fret, Finnikin, there's a love. It is only the postman," said Mrs. Rashly, the mamma.

"*Only* the postman—I like that. It is all very well for you, mamma, to say *only* the postman, because you live within your in-

come, and never expect any bill but a *billet doux*. Now I, with my liberal allowance, as the old gentlemen call £300 per annum, paid quarterly, confess to a debt or two; and if I *have* a prejudice, it is against being impertinently reminded of the gross amount of them, and of my numerous promises to discharge them."

"You are very extravagant, Finny, you must allow," said Miss Lætitia Rashly, a young lady who ventured to lecture her brother now and then upon the strength of her being one year older than he was.

"Extravagant, Letty! well, I like that. I flatter myself that I lay out my money rather economically and judiciously than not—don't I, mamma? Can I live as I do upon a smaller outlay?"

"Why, if you keep horses and—" commenced Miss Letty, not giving mamma a chance of responding.

"Keep horses *and*—what else?" asked the mamma, rather alarmed.

"Ponies and puppy-dogs," said Letty.

"If I *have* a prejudice, it is decidedly

against girls who will talk of what they know nothing about. I merely keep a park-horse, a buggy-horse, and a couple of little *tar*riers."

"Yes, to worry rats and cats, and jump upon sofas and ottomans, and dirty one's dresses," said the sister.

"Letty, my love, young men must do as other young men do. There is nothing immoral or vicious in your brother's pursuits. Horse exercise is strongly recommended by the faculty, and what is a dog but 'his master's protector and friend,' as the song says? And as for Finny's little Pluto and Proserpine worrying cats, I can see no objection to it; provided they limit their attentions to our neighbours; and rats, you know, are an uncommon nuisance when they frequent your common sewer."

"As usual, mamma — in your opinion, Finny is like the king or the queen—he can do no wrong; but, if I indulge in a little waltzing or polkaizing, I am snubbed and looked inky upon."

"Nonsense, Letty," said the brother; "mamma does not object to a waltz or a

polka now and then; but, like myself, if she *has* a prejudice, it is against a girl who is perpetually pirouetting with grown up men."

"Infamous! as if I—"

But Miss Letty Rashly's reply was prevented by the entrance of the footman with a very small note on a very large silver salver.

"That's not an £. *s. d.*," said Finnikin; "no note for me, Thomas?"

Thomas bowed a negative, and held the salver to his mistress.

"Oh! delightful," said Miss Letty, peeping over her mother's shoulder. "It is a letter from dear Issy Canterwell—I know she writes to say that she is coming up to Chelsea to spend a month with us."

"If I *have* a prejudice, it is against any body and every body who professes to judge of the interior of a letter by a glimpse of the exterior. Mamma, open and read it."

But Mrs. Rashly was one of those persons who never will open a letter before they have inspected the handwriting, examined the seal, and looked at the postmark, all the while

really-do-believing it *is*, and then really-do-believing that it is *not* from some person who writes just such a style of hand, and lives very near the town whose name is expressed on the post-mark.

Mr. Finnikin Rashly *had* a prejudice against persons of this sort; but he knew that a bare hint on the subject would lead to a longer delay in the opening of the note, the contents of which he was anxious to learn. He therefore held his tongue, and a clean knife to his mamma, with which she might carefully cut round the seal; an old plan of hers that she would not give up, although Mr. Rowland Hill had long enabled her correspondents to use an envelope.

"She *is* coming," said Lætitia, clapping her hands with delight.

"Letty, my love, it is very rude to read an epistle directed to another person. Your old schoolfellow, Miss Isabella Canterwell, *is* good enough to accept my kind invitation, in a fine Italian hand, and intends to stay a month or six weeks, if agreeable, on satin-wove paper."

"Delightful!" said Lætitia. "She's such a dear, and so rich."

"Then I rather think I may buy the gray, and give Osborn a bill at two months," said Finnikin to himself. "I must be a muff if, with my advantages, I cannot secure a country girl in a much shorter space than that."

So saying, Finnikin rose from the breakfast-table, and surveyed himself in the pier-glass; and it may be as well to inform the reader at once of the image he saw reflected on its polished surface. It was the figure of a little man, having some twenty-two years, rather short legs and arms, a corpulent *medium*, and a large head, communicating with his body by a short neck, and covered with long, sandy-coloured hair. The face was fat and flabby, and nearly obscured by whiskers and moustaches, which had a prejudice against curling. It was dressed in a pair of light-gray trousers, nearly covering the feet, and through two little holes in the bottom of them the toes of a pair of French boots were just visible. The upper part was clad in a "summer vest" of white, with a pink stripe, and a

greenish drab coat, single-breasted, and cu away over the hips. Its neck was encircled with a blue and white bit of cambric, with a waterfall front, in which was fastened a large gold pin, meant to represent a fox. When it put on its hat, which it did with some care and attention before the pier-glass, it put on one of those napless things, with a small flat rim to them, encircled with a sort of silk watchguard, peculiar to gentlemen who are, or who are anxious to be thought, perpetually on horseback, and exposed to the loss of their hats, unless they have a something to prevent their escape when they are jolted off their heads. A pair of spicy dogskin gloves on its hands, and a very small yellow cane whip-handle under its left-arm, completed the image which was reflected from the glass before which Mr. Finnikin Rashly had placed himself.

"Finny, dear, you ain't going out all day, I hope. Mamma will be busy preparing for dear Issy, and I want you to take me shopping. I must get a few things ready for the dance we *must* give. When shall you be home?"

"Letty," said the brother, solemnly, and giving his head a peculiar jerk, so as to bring his whiskers within his collar—"Letty, if I *have* a prejudice, it is against any girl who asks a man when he shall be home. That very question has damaged the harmony of thousands of happy couples. Expect me when you see me. Mamma, lend me a sovereign."

"Don't, mamma; he will dine out if you do," whispered Letty.

But mamma did, merely reminding her son that that made eleven, which she should deduct out of next quarter.

Finnikin *had* a prejudice against being reminded of such trifles, but he had no doubt of speedily releasing himself from such unpleasantries through the medium of Miss Issy Canterwell. He put the eleventh sovereign "advanced" into his waistcoat-pocket, gave his head another jerk into his collar, and set off to try if Osborn would stand a bill at two months for a celebrated gray standing in his stables.

While he was going eastward in a Chelsea bus, and trying to astonish the insides by

biting the handle of his whip, and asking the cad for some "silver for a sovereign," it will not be amiss to give a slight sketch of the domestic history of the Rashlys.

The departed Rashly was a most respectable tradesman in Oxford Street. He died young, but had made sufficient money in a few years to enable him to leave his widow some £600 per annum, £300 of which were to be at the disposal of his son as soon as he came of age. The amount procured by the sale of the premises, and the good-will of the business, was to be funded as a fortune for Miss Lætitia.

Mrs. Rashly sold the shop in Oxford Street, and retired into the country, as she called Chelsea. There she devoted all her energies and a large portion of her income to the education of her two children. Master Finnikin was sent to a proprietary school as a day-scholar; his sister to an establishment for young ladies at Kensington, as a boarder. The boy was shy and stupid, and formed no friendships. The girl was, on the contrary, clever, and by no means shy. She flew at

high game, and made many dear friends, and among the number a most particular dear friend of Miss Isabella Canterwell, the daughter of a wealthy country gentleman.

When Master Finnikin left school, his mamma suggested to him the propriety of his finishing the education he had commenced at the proprietary school at one of the universities.

"Thank you, mamma, but I had rather not," said he; "for if I *have* a prejudice, it is against a lot of fellows who call me 'Dowlas, filthy Dowlas,' because papa says—you know what." And, as he said this, he drew his hand along an imaginary yard measure, and made believe to measure off a yard of some imaginary silk, satin, or velvet fabric.

Mrs. Rashly, good easy woman, did not persist. Instead of sending her son to Oxford or Cambridge, to imbibe doses of classics or mathematics, she allowed him to become a man about town, and a frequenter of the parks and playhouses.

Finnikin was not vicious, nor was he very extravagant. He kept a horse or two, and a

dog or two, but he kept no low company. His pet fancy was to dress in the extreme of bad taste, and to astonish the public—the humble public—for he was shy of "real gents." His delight was to walk into a third-rate coffee-room, and when he asked "What was to pay?" for his cheap dinner, to chuck down half-a-crown, after he had discharged his "little account," and say to the waiter, "Tom, you're a very civil fellow—take that for yourself." He would then walk slowly down the room, and gratify himself by wondering if there was any other *gent.* in the place that would tip as handsomely.

Another delight of our hero was to be seen in the park on a "very spicy tit," which he kept in a stable belonging to an inn, or rather a little public, at the rear of his mamma's premises, and to astonish the weak minds of the ostlers of the houses where there is a good entertainment for man and horse, in the environs of London, by discussing learnedly on the science of naggery, although he knew not a spavin from a ring-bone, or a curb from a capped hock.

The day named in the satin-wove paper arrived, and Miss Isabella Canterwell was expected to arrive at "six precise" to dinner.

Now, Mrs. Rashly was a plain, homely sort of body, who never went out a visiting, and never had any visiters at home, except some of the young men and their wives, who formerly belonged to the establishment in Oxford Street, and had now set up establishments of their own. They generally came on the Sunday, and, whenever Miss Lætitia had due notice of their coming, she invited herself to dine out somewhere else, although her acquaintance was not a very extensive one. Finnikin did not care about their coming. They dined at two o'clock, the hour at which he mounted his nag for a canter round the parks, and he rather liked astonishing his mamma's friends by coming in to dinner just as they were "teaing." It gave him consequence in their eyes, he thought, which he endeavoured to confirm by joining them over his wine, and giving them an account of the slap-up people with whom he had been riding in the park. As he invited them to share

his bottle, and proposed a quiet cigar afterwards, he was considered a "perfect gentleman, with no pride about him but such as was becoming his situation."

As Mrs. Rashly found that her little dinners, made up of a joint and pudding, were highly approved by *her* friends, she did not hesitate to treat her daughter's friend in the same way, and ordered her cook to boil a leg of mutton, with turnips, and to make a damson pie.

"Mamma," said Miss Letty, "that will never do for *my* friend. You forget that Issy is the daughter and sole heiress of a country gentleman who never sits down without soups, fish, *pièces de resistance*, side dishes, *entrées*, a profusion of pastry, and cheeses in variety. She would turn up her nose at the turnips and mutton."

"Ay, and d—n the damson pie!" said Finny. "You must come out, mamma, for once."

"Well, I am sure I do not know what to order. Betty, our cook, is only a plain cook, and was hired as such. Eight pounds a year

are not wages for soups and side dishes. I do not know what to do, I am sure," said Mrs. Rashly.

"Leave it all to me," said Finny. "Tip me two sovereigns, mamma, and at six precise you shall see a slap-up little spread on the table."

"Thank you, Finny, thank you," said his sister; "only don't order anything at a pastrycooks, their soups are so very thin, and their made dishes so very small for your money; besides, their tartlets smell of hot pewter, and betray their makers at once."

"You leave me alone, Letty; I don't dine out now and then for nothing. I know a slap-up *restorature* or two, and am not unknown to their waiters. Just see if I don't do something out and out genteel, at a very low figure too. If I *have* a prejudice, it is against having a bad dinner, and having to pay dear for it. I'll just order the spread, take a ride round the ring, and be home to dress ready to receive my—eh?—my *future* Letty. Trouble you for the two *sovs.*,

mamma, which are *not* to be deducted from 'the quarter.'"

"Well, of course we do not send back what is not eaten, and it will do to warm up for a second day," said mamma, "or else I do think two sovereigns for a dinner for four is rather excessive."

"Trouble you for another two sovs. though, mamma," said Finny, coming back; "I forgot the wine. You have nothing but sherries, and ports, and Brontis. We must have champagne and a little claret. Fork out, and leave it to me."

Mrs. Rashly slowly produced the coins, and began a long speech on the impropriety of young ladies drinking anything beyond one glass of port wine, which she knew was proper with their fruit. This suggested to her son the necessity of having a nice dessert, which he offered to procure upon the production of another sov. In vain did Mrs. Rashly hold out against grapes and a pine. Finny assured her it was quite correct, and Letty told her that no country gentleman with a gardener ever tasted any other fruit.

The sovereign was given, and Finny fled to execute his commissions, but suddenly returned to remind his mamma not to put those cursed tallows on the table, that wanted snuffing every two minutes, but to procure a supply of coloured wax, and to buy Peter, the page, a new pair of white Berlins, to hide his nasty red hands.

Poor Mrs. Rashly was exceedingly angry with herself for having yielded to her daughter's earnest entreaties to invite her dearest Issy to come and spend a month or two with them, "For," said she to herself, doing a rule of three sum in her mind, "if it costs five sovereigns to entertain one young lady one day, what will it cost to keep her for one month?"

However, Letty took care that she should not have much time for working out the sum. She hurried her mamma off to the grocer's for the wax candles, and to the draper's for Peter's gloves, and in her way made her purchase many other little things which she deemed indispensable as preparatives for the reception of her wealthy friend.

Five o'clock arrived, and with it Finny, in tip-top spirits. He had bought the gray, and Osborn had taken the bill for £80 at two months, and given him a warrantry. He had ridden the gray, and Joe, the ostler of the Spaniards, on Hampstead Heath, had assured him it was a very clever hackney, which offended the owner of the gray, until Joe explained that, by the term hackney, he did not mean a hackney-coach horse, but a "rale, genteel roadster." Finny went up to dress, and when he came down his mamma pronounced him perfect, but Letty told him he had rather a choky look about the throat, and was a little too redolent of Macassar.

Six o'clock came, and with it a cab to Mrs. Rashly's door. Rap-rap-rap went the knocker; and when Peter, in his white gloves, of which he was excessively proud, had opened it, a lady followed by a maid and a series of boxes, emerged from the cab. Miss Letty cried out, "'Tis she, my early friend," and rushed down stairs to embrace her. Finny went to the glass, gave his clay-coloured locks a twist, and jerked his head

into his collar. Mrs. Rashly, who had seen by the gas lamps two females arrive instead of one, wondered who the second could be, and whether the five sovereigns would procure dinner, wine, and dessert enough for five people.

"Pooh! nonsense, mamma," said Finny, "it's only her maid. Every slap-up lady travels with a maid."

"And will she sleep with her mistress?" asked Mrs. Rashly.

"I should rather think, if Miss Canterwell *has* a prejudice, it would be against sharing her sheets with a menial," said Finny.

"Then, heavens, what am I do? Cook and Mary sleep in the front garret, and Peter in the back. I have not a spare bed," said Mrs. Rashly, in dire dismay.

"Don't be funky, mamma! put her in Peter's room, give me a sov., and I'll get him lodgings for a month over my stables."

Before the arrangement could be completed, Miss Letty returned to the drawing-room, and introduced her dear friend to her mamma and her brother. The mamma

courtsied, as if she were salaaming a queen, and her son, meaning to "come the intimate," as he said, at once, shook her by the hand, and jerked his head violently into his collar, telling her he was d—d glad to see her—an announcement that was received with so wide a stare from a pair of flashing dark eyes that made the young gentleman drop the hand he had taken, and retreat to his station near the fire.

The young ladies retired, to give the newly-arrived guest an opportunity of exchanging her travelling-suit. Finny said he hoped she would not be long unharnessing, for he wanted his feed.

"Ring, and order the dinner," said mamma.

"Peter," said Finny," "be ready to put the dinner on the table the moment you hear the bell ring."

"Yes, sir," said Peter; "only, if you please, sir, there ain't no dinner to put on."

"What, you fool! no dinner? Why, I ordered it at six precise, and it's now a quarter past."

"Please, sir, nothin ain't come, but some bottles with leaden roofs upon 'em, and a yellow rough thing, with a hallo growing out of its top, and some —"

"Ay, ay, the champagne and pineapple—but where *can* the dinner be?" asked Finny of his mamma.

Mamma only shook her head, and her cap and flowers.

"Please, sir, cookey says she thinks the man must have made a mistake and took it next door, for she seed a man in a white cap, with a tray in his hand, rapping when the cab was a setting down.

"Ay, setting down two females and carrying our dinner to the wrong house. But how d—d dishonourable of them to take it in!" said Finny.

"Yes, and to take us in to," said Peter.

"Don't be rude, Peter, but go with my compliments to next door—no, stop, I'll go myself."

Mr. Finny ran round to No. 6, and knocked loudly. When the door was opened, he asked if his dinner from Stuffem's, the *re-*

storature of Rupert Street, had been left there by mistake.

"There! I know'd it warn't for us, though the man said it was, and was all paid for—fifteen and nine—and he'd come to-morrow morning for the dishes and kivers," said the maid.

"Then why did you take it in, if you knew it was not for you?" said Finny, indignantly.

"Lawks! why master and missus was out, and how did I know what to do? It was paid for."

"Where is it, woman?" asked Finny.

"Why, lawks! here in the parlour—the children, poor dears, has been rather fingering the pies, and—"

"Curse the children!" said Finny; "the vollyvong is smashed, and the cheesecakes crushed to crumbs. But what is to be done? There, my love, carry the tray in next door, and I'll give you a shilling."

The maid did as she was bidden, and Finny rushed before her down stairs into his own kitchen, and entreated the cook to do

the best she could with the mutilated and half-cold dinner.

A long hour passed after Finny returned to the drawing-room, without any signs of the dinner being announced, and what made it appear longer was that Miss Isabella kept whispering to Lætitia how hungry she was after her long journey, just loudly enough for poor Finny and his mamma, who was not in the secret of the cause of the delay, to hear her.

At length Peter entered to say dinner was on table. But, good gracious! what a sight met the eyes of the hungry party when the first cover was removed! The cod's head and shoulders was a mass of bones standing on a wet napkin amid a transparent sort of soup.

"What *is* that?" said Miss Letty.

"Please, miss, cookey only hotted it up by master's orders, and it's all come to an atomy," said Peter.

"Remove it," said Finny, as coolly as he could, and bring in the second course."

The skeleton of the cod was succeded by a fore-quarter of lamb—lamb in October!—

which, from being roasted a second time by cookey, looked as if the animal, while alive, had had the ague, and shivered its flesh off its bones. Two side dishes, one of stewed kidneys, and the other of sweetbreads, looked, the former like pickled walnuts, and the latter like two bits of sponge in soap-and-water sauce. At the bottom was the *vol-au-vent*, which presented an odd appearance, as cookey had made some fresh paste, to replace the original crust which the children of No. 6 had so cruelly mutilated. It looked like an old wall with a large patch of new plaster on it.

Finnikin was very much annoyed, for, although he gave the best cut he could find to the new guest, he saw by the way she picked it and pulled it about, and then laid down her knife and fork amidst the *débris*, that it was not relished.

"I'm sorry our cook should have made such a mistake in her calculations," began Mr. Rashly.

"Please, sir, cookey says if she had had to dress it herself instead of—"

"Silence, Peter; champagne to Miss Canterwell."

Peter, who had been instructed how to twist off the wire and cut the string, did so. He was very much surprised to find the cork fly out of the bottle with a bang and the wine follow it.

"Crikey, if I haven't been and smothered old missus!" said the boy, looking horrified.

"You fool!" said Finnikin, "pour out the wine directly."

But Peter was so much alarmed, that, instead of obeying the order, he ran about the room with his white-covered thumb thrust into the neck of the bottle, exclaiming,

"Cus the stuff! who'd a thought of its being hup!"

Finnikin was not a bad-tempered man; but, when he thought of the failure in the dinner, and saw Miss Canterwell convulsed with laughter at Peter's antics, and his sister rubbing down his mother with a dinner-napkin, he lost all command of himself, and, seizing Peter by the collar, opened the door, and kicked him down stairs. His arrival at the

bottom was announced by the smash of the bottle which had caused his misfortunes.

"O deary me! oh! the poor boy is killed," screamed Mrs. Rashly.

"Serve him right, mamma," said Miss Letty. "There, you're nice and dry now, and it's justifiable boyicide if Peter is dead, I'm sure."

"If I have a prejudice, it is against a lout like that, who knows nothing, and won't be taught," said Finnikin.

Miss Canterwell good-naturedly interfered, and after a time Peter was called for again. He put in his appearance—but what an appearance it was! Even Mrs. Rashly and her son, indignant as they justly were, could not refrain from laughing, when they saw him enter with a handkerchief tied tightly about his left knee, and his head half obscured by a white napkin, to hide a long gaping wound in his forehead, and another on his nose, caused by the broken glass.

"Leave the room, sir, this instant, and send up Sally," said Peter's master.

Sally, the housemaid, came, but she was so

agitated by laughing at Peter's appearance, that she committed all sorts of enormities, and amongst the rest upset the mint-sauce over her master's trousers.

Finnikin bore it very philosophically, and, to hide his feelings, opened a bottle of champagne himself, and helped the ladies.

"Delicious!" said Miss Issy. "St. Peray, is it not?"

"Perry! I should think not indeed! It's Ruinard's best at five-and-nine, bottles returned," said Finnikin. "Try another glass."

Miss Issy did so, and tried not to laugh—but it would not do. The attempt was a failure, and the wine going the wrong way, as it is called, made her cough, and kick so violently that she was forced to leave the room, followed by her friend and her hostess.

Finnikin quietly finished the champagne, and as his sister told him that her friend declined appearing again that evening, being very unwell, he put on his hat, jumped into a bus, and vented all his fury upon Stuffem's head-waiter, who had caused all his calamities by sending a dinner for four to No. 6.

"Why, the last words as you said was, 'Mind, don't forget, *at six*,'" said Thomas; "and, in course, I sent it to 6."

"That was the hour, not the number, you —you—donkey. I shall not patronise this *restorature* any longer."

To show that he was in earnest, Finnikin walked into the opposition house just opposite, and drank several *goes* of fluid as an accompaniment to several cigars.

Finnikin woke with a bad headache, and a feeling that something had gone wrong with him overnight, but what it was he could not recollect, until, getting out of bed and looking into the glass, he missed his whiskers and moustaches. A cold clammy sweat came over him as he stood and gazed. Where had he been? Who had dared to do such a daring deed? He sat down at the bed-foot, and tried to recall all the events of the past night. He could recollect nothing after the fifth cigar but two "genteel chaps," students in medicine, offering to see him home in a cab. Had he been robbed?—No, his money was all right, except what he might fairly deduct for

cigars, *goes*, and a cab home? When did he come home? How did he get to bed? To obtain an answer to these questions he rang his bell, and then sprang between the sheets again, and pulled them over his face, leaving only his eyes visible.

Peter, who had been cleverly court-plaistered by cookey, in answer to his master's questions, informed him that he was brought home about one in the morning in a cab, by two young "gents," who said they were medical men, and that, as the gentleman had had a fit, they should see him into bed, and begged that the family might not be disturbed.

"What did they do?—how long did they stay?" asked Finnikin.

"About half-an-hour, sir—till I could get the kittle to boil; for they said you must have some hot brandy-and-water before they left you."

"Did I have any?"

"I can't say, sir, but either you or they did, for there's the bottle empty," said Peter.

"Undraw the curtains and pull up the

blind. Then tell the ladies I shall not be down to breakfast."

"Please, sir, it's two o'clock in the afternoon, and the ladies is gone out for a walk," said Peter.

"Then leave me, and when Miss Letty comes in tell her I wish to speak with her in my room; and, Peter, don't let mamma or the young lady hear you deliver the message."

As soon as the boy had left the room, his master rose again, and opened the drawer of his dressing-table. It was as he suspected. There, before him, on his shaving-cloth, lay the ruins of his whiskers and moustaches! In the handle of his razor was a piece of paper. He opened it, and read this bit of doggrel:

> We thought it a pity that features so fair
> Should be everlastingly hidden by hair;
> When next you're inclined to get drunk and behave
> As no gentleman should do, remember our shave.
>
> TOM SMITH & JACK BROWN.

Finnikin was dreadfully disgusted, and meditated all sorts of revenge. He had a very

great mind to use the razor once more, and for the last time. He felt for his carotid, and, as it bumped under his finger, he thought he would cut it, for what was life to him without whiskers? He wisely resolved to dress himself, and hear what his sister had to say to console him before he put his razor to an illegitimate use.

Two hours passed before his sister returned—two long, tedious, miserable hours. At length came a rap at the street-door, then a light pit-a-patting on the stairs, the handle of his door was turned, and a slight shriek and an exclamation of "Oh! goodness me!" told him that his appearance was horrible in his sister's eyes. He uttered a deep groan, and threw himself on his bed and kicked convulsively, saying, "I am an altered man."

"What *is* the matter?" asked Miss Letty.

"Cannot you see?" said Finnikin, pointing to his bare cheeks and upper lip.

"Well, if you have not been doing —"

"No, no, thou can'st not say *I* did it," said Finnikin.

"Whoever did it—it is the very thing that

my dear Issy has been wishing to have done."

"You don't say so?" said Finnikin, brightening up.

"I do, indeed—for when I hinted to the dear girl what an excellent husband you would make her, she told me that you looked more like a bear than a beau, and that she could never endure a man who was ashamed to show more than half his face to her."

"Hurrah! then I'll say I cut them off on purpose to please her," said Finnikin; and so pleased was he at the notion of getting so cleverly out of the scrape, that he freely told his sister everything that had happened to him, and even laughed with her at himself, and gave up all thoughts of shooting or poniarding Smith and Brown, and of course of cutting his own carotid. It is needless to add, that he bound his sister to the strictest secrecy.

But how was Peter to be stopped from revealing the secrets of the past night? He had not seen the effects of the razorings of Smith and Brown, and only knew that his

master had a fit, and was seen home in a cab by two medical students.

Finnikin lathered his face and shaved clean, then rang his bell, and boldly ordered Peter to remove the ruins of his whiskers, and told him not to mention the fit of the overnight to any body, for fear it should alarm his mother.

Peter stared at his master, and hardly knew him, metamorphosed as he was—but he quietly pocketed a half-*sov*, which his hand received with the order to be silent on the subject of the fit, and made up his mind that his master would be in a lunatic asylum in less than a week.

Finnikin had to face his mother with his bare face. He did so. She looked terrified; but, before she could utter a remark, her son coolly said, "If I *have* a prejudice, it is decidedly against people who will imitate me. Every counter-skipper sports a moustache and whiskers; so you see—eh? I've cut them clean."

Mrs. Rashly declared she was glad of it, and that her son looked kissable; in proof

whereof, she *smudged* him for some five minutes.

Finnikin, having escaped from the embraces of his mamma, sought the drawing-room in fear and trembling, but one look from his sister, telegraphing "all right," and a sweet smile from Miss Isabella, put him at ease. Cookey had prepared a very nice little dinner; the champagne, the leavings of the preceding day, was exceedingly good; Peter did his duty admirably, and all went off pleasantly.

After dinner they had a little music, and a round game at cards; then a little biscuiting and wine-and-watering, during which Miss Canterwell entered on the subject of horses. Finnikin went off double-Derby pace upon his favourite hobby, but was quickly brought to a check by the lady, who asked him "if he had ever hunted?"

Finnikin hardly liked to say no—but he did, qualifying it with an assertion that he meant to hunt with the "Old Wiltshire" as soon as they met.

"Then," said Miss Isabella, "you must

be quick about your arrangements, for the day after to-morrow is the first meet of the season."

Mr. Finnikin Rashly did not quite relish the question, "Did you ever hunt?" put to him by Miss Isabella Canterwell. Still less did he like the tone in which it was put, or the smile, the very peculiar smile, which accompanied it. However, he had answered the question by a knowing look, and an assertion that, although he had not as yet ventured to follow the hounds, he meant to have a day with the "Old Wiltshire," and, having made the assertion, he had nothing to do but to fulfil his promise.

"Peter," said he, "be uncommon particular in brushing my boots, and in cleaning the tops; I am going hunting to-morrow—at least I am going down by rail to be ready for the next day; and if I *have* a prejudice, it is decidedly against appearing in the field without having everything *cummy-fo*."

"Don't the reg'lar swells ride in red?" said Peter.

"Pink, Peter, pink; it used to be called scarlet; but it's the fashion to call it pink now."

"Ah!" said Peter, "I've heard of 'the pink of fashion' before, but I never knew till now that it meant an 'unting coat."

"What a fool you are, Peter! but what could put a pink coat into your head?"

"This here pictorial tailor's bill, or illustrated London fashions," replied Peter, as he pulled out of his pocket a large sheet of paper, in which were engraved male beings of all ages, in the dresses which some advertising tailor deemed most suitable to them. "There, you see, sir, there's 'the morning sir toot' and 'the evening costume,' and there's 'the prime bang-away shooting-coat,' and there at the bottom is 'the correct cut-away for Meltonians.'"

"Ay, and deuced well that tall, handsome chap looks in it," said Finnikin, admiring an effeminate-looking individual, depicted in a very knowing hat, an enormous striped shawl, a scarlet coat, with a waist about as large as a bumble-bee's, very loose leathers, and enor-

mous black Horse-guard's boots, with feet so small, that a little girl of six years of age would never have been able to get them on. "That's the correct dodge, I know, but I am not provided with pink, and must put up with plain clothes for once. It don't much matter, as nobody knows me where I am going."

Peter continued to admire the tailor's fashionable figures for some time; and then, after playing with his right ear for a moment, looked at his master very deferentially, and suggested "that he thought he could purvide a pink if—"

"If what?" asked his master, putting his fingers into his waistcoat-pocket, and playing with two sovereigns.

"No, it ain't nothing to do with money," said Peter, reading his master's thoughts; "I could have the loan of it, if—if you would not mind wearing a *royal mailer*."

"A what?" said Finnikin, completely at fault.

"A prime scarlet, with crowns on the buttons, as poor old Jem used to have given to him every year, when there were lots of mails

and no rails: this is in prime condition; for the coach was taken off the road in July, and he had it new on the 4th of June. He takes great care of it, because it reminds him of the good old times."

"Confound your impudence, sir!" said Finnikin, looking highly indignant. "If I *have* a prejudice, it is decidedly against wearing a cast-off livery coat."

"Well," said Peter, "if it is a livery-coat, it's the royal livery, and they'll only fancy you belong to the Queen's stag-hounds or Prince Albert's Harriers."

Mr. Rashly thought there was something in that; but, when he found by questioning Peter that Jem's coat was a straight one, and not a cut-away, or even a swallow-tail, and, moreover, had a great deal of gold-lace upon its collar and cuffs, he had sense enough to decline applying for the loan of it.

Peter was grieved at the failure of his suggestion; but, upon examining his pictorial tailor's bill still further, he saw an announcement at the foot of it that "Downey and Sons kept a large assortment of every style

suitable to all sizes and figures." He pointed it out to his master, and in a few minutes Finnikin might have been seen hurrying into the city to the establishment of Downey and Sons. He made known his wishes by pointing with his whip-handle to one of the figures exhibited in the shop, and desired that one of the coats should be shown to him immediately, suitable to his size and figure.

A large bundle was placed on the counter; and, when the canvass covering was removed, Finny was delighted to see a really large assortment of brilliant scarlets, with bright buttons of the reynard pattern upon them. He tried them on one after another, but, oh! horror! none of the small ones had quite enough *middle* for his little but *pudgy* figure.

Downey and Sons assured him that "it did not matter whether the coat would button or not, as it was the fashion with Count Buckskin and the Prince, for whom they always *made*, to ride with the coat open, to show the pattern and cut of the vest."

Finny looked at them and then at the picture, in which the fine young man was repre

sented closely buttoned up. They saw his meaning, and merely said that "there the Count's coat was shown *as buttoned.*"

Finny looked at himself in a long glass, and thought that he became the coat very much. He thought, too, that Miss Isabella Canterwell would have but a mean opinion of a man who did not hunt in pink—that settled his doubts.

"Well," said he, "I must make it do, as I am pressed for time. What's the price?"

"Only six guineas, sir,—West-enders charge them at ten," said Downey and Sons, bowing.

"I say, though, that's a high figure for a ready made and scanty fit,—take off a guinea and send it home, and I'll pay you next quarter-day," said Mr. Rashly.

"Six guineas is the lowest price for *cash.* We make no reductions, and never book any article. 'For ready money only,' that's our motto," said Downey and Sons.

"Take a bill at two months?" inquired Finny. "I'm rather *short* just now."

"Then wait till you grow taller before you come here to insult us with a bill at two

months for six pounds six," said Downey and Sons, pulling off the pink very rudely, and ordering their man to replace it in its wrapper. They then left Mr. Rashly to put on his own drab-green cut-away without any assistance from them. When he had resumed his hat and whip-handle, and had got very near the open door, he bravely told them, "they were a set of cursed swindlers and dealers in slops, and that if he *had* a prejudice, it was decidedly against wearing a coat bought of mere slopsellers."

The word swindlers did not affect the firm in the least. They heard it philosophically; but, when the words slops and slopsellers reached their ears, their pride was hurt—indignation was manifested in their looks. They rushed in a body at the utterer of them, and, had not he bolted rapidly into the midst of the passing throng, Mr. Rashly would assuredly have felt the weight of a tailor's fist.

Finny walked homewards, and looked into every tailor's shop in the long thoroughfare leading westward. He saw many pictorial

bills in the windows, but at the bottom of every one of them the fatal words, "for ready money only." He had given up all thoughts of "a pink" just as he arrived at a narrow street in the Strand, called Holywell Street. He had scarcely set his foot in it, before he was asked by a gentleman of the Jewish persuasion whether he had any left-off apparel to dispose of, or felt inclined to purchase any one of the numerous articles that hung suspended in front of a small shop-window. Finny, without a moment's hesitation, rushed into the shop, and inquired if there was such an article among the stores as a good second-hand hunting-coat, adding that "he merely wanted it for one of his *fellows* in the country whom he was going to try as second whipper-in."

The Israelite did not even inquire the size of "the fellow in the country," but, with a meaning smile, produced a scarlet coat, and held it ready for Finny to try on. He did so, and was pleased to find that it fitted him exactly. He inquired the price. The Jew, after expatiating on the soundness of the

article, asked three guineas for it. Finny told him he was not to be done so easily, and offered one. After a considerable waste of words on both sides, it was agreed to split the difference. The Jew pocketed a guinea and a half, and handed the coat, neatly tied up in brown paper, to the happy purchaser, who put it under his arm, and popped into the first Chelsea *bus* that passed.

When he arrived at his home, Mr. Rashly displayed his prize to the admiring Peter, who was so anxious to see how his master looked in it, that he urged him to dress himself immediately, although the train by which he was to proceed to the station nearest to the meet of the Old Wiltshire hounds was not to start for some four hours.

Finnikin readily indulged his servant's curiosity; and a few minutes sufficed to present him to his approving gaze in a pair of immaculate white cords, top-boots, a spicy waistcoat, and the brilliant pink coat.

"Shall I do?" said Finnikin.

"Do?" replied Peter, "there can't be a doubt about it. You beats the man as sings

'Tallyho to the Merry Horn' at Hashley's into fits. Do just go over to the stables, sir, and let Jem have a sight of you."

Now Finnikin's nearest way to his stables was through the garden at the back of his house, but he preferred going round by the road, although it consumed more of his valuable time. What was the use of having expended thirty-one shillings and sixpence upon a pink coat, if the coat was to be seen by nobody but a chance gazer out of a neighbouring back-window? He was amply repaid for the additional trouble he had taken by the stares of every astonished passenger whom he met, which his vivid imagination did not fail to convert into looks of excessive approbation.

As to Jem, he was too much astonished at the appearance of "the young gent as rented a stall and a loose box," to be capable of giving utterance to his feelings. He merely said,

"Recollect, sir, them as mounts in pink is expected to ride at every thing."

A momentary qualm at this bit of news made Finnikin feel choky and uncomfortable,

but the thought that Jem knew more about driving mail-horses than riding to hounds soon established his confidence in the propriety of the steps he had taken to appear in the field after the most approved style of fashion. He told Jem that he should ride to the terminus, and see the gray put into a horse-box himself.

"Not in that dress, sir, I hope," said Jem; "you will only get laughed at by the grooms of the *real* swells, as goes forrard with their masters' horses, while they follers by an early train next morning. Put on the roughest wrapper you've got, and a pair of leggings over your boots, and then you'll be thought to be somebody."

Finnikin did not relish the advice until he remembered that he had seen a print in a sporting magazine, in which all the *gents* were represented as "riding to cover" in the style of dress recommended by Jem.

He could not resist the temptation of showing himself to his sister Letty and Miss Issy Canterwell, before he obscured the glories of his bright pink by the dinginess of a top-

coat, and was very much annoyed to find that they were gone out for a walk, and would not be back before he must start for the terminus. His mother's admiration of his appearance, however, even mixed as it was by hints, "to take great care of himself, and mind he did not fall off," consoled him greatly; as he had no doubt she would give an accurate description of his dress to the young ladies on their return home. He made a hearty luncheon, and borrowed two *sovs.* "on account," of his mamma, and, long before the time arrived for the departure of the train, mounted his gray, and with a cigar stuck in his mouth, and his top-coat carelessly unbottoned, just enough to give people a peep at his pink, rode very slowly to Paddington.

"Here, my fine fellow, you, come here! I want an inside place for my hunter to Downham station. I am going to have a day with the Old Wiltshire to-morrow."

The porter, to whom this was spoken in a tone truly magnificent, took no notice of the speaker, but quietly said to another porter,

"Show that 'ere chap into the yard, and order a horse-box."

"Come, sir, this way—now then, jump off, and we'll box him in five minutes, while you go and get your tickets," said the second porter.

"Thank you, my fine fellow, but I'd rather see him safe inside myself. I mean to ride in the same carriage with him, for fear of accidents."

"It's against the rules, sir; but you need not be afeard—he's going in good company. Lord Lumberly's Breakshins and Major Fleet's Lashout is going in the same box, and to the same station. There's their grooms," said the porter.

Two very supercilious young men, dressed in drab-coats and top-boots, very much wrinkled about the ankles, with peculiar small hats on their heads, stared at Finnikin, winked at each other, and put Breakshins and Lashout into their respective stalls in the box prepared for them.

"Just do the same for me; only mind, he's raythor a spirited one, my fine fellows, and then get me a light for my cigar."

The two grooms took no more notice of this request than if they had not heard it; and the porter told Mr. Finnikin smoking was not allowed, under a penalty of five pounds.

"And deuced expensive too!" said Finnikin, determined to say something to hide his disgust at the cavalier conduct of Lord Lumberly and Major Fleet's grooms.

"Where's the clothes, sir?" said the porter.

"Clothes? what clothes? Oh, I see, my luggage—that's all right," said Finnikin.

"I mean the horse's clothes," replied the porter.

"Oh, they will provide them at the inn where I am going to," said Finnikin.

"All I can say is," said the porter, "if that 'ere gray is to go eighty mile in no other coat but his own, he'll have the snuffles, even if he escapes the glanders."

Finny was surprised and alarmed, and a little disposed to fancy that the official was trying to hoax him; but, when he saw the two grooms return to the horse-box, and strap a series of blankets and rugs over Breakshins and Lashout, he had serious fears

in his mind that the gray, for which he had given a heavy bill at two months to Osborn, might perish on the road.

"Can't I borrow or hire a blanket or two?"

"Impossible, sir; we're not expected to find luxuries on the line for the *lines* of horses. Pull off your top-coat, and throw it over his *lines*, clap the saddle a top of that, and he'll go snug enough. But look sharp, there goes the fust bell, and you'll lose your ticket."

Finnikin threw off his coat, and saw it placed on the gray, and ran down the platform into the office.

"One horse and one man to Downham, how much?"

"One horse, one guinea and ninepence; one man, eight and six," said the book-keeper.

"What, charge more for a horse than a human being," inquired Finnikin, "and no turnpikes to pay? It's a gross imposition, and I'll write to the editor of *The Times* about it."

"Stand aside, sir, if you please; here's

the 'busses coming," said a porter, knocking Finny's shins with two portmanteaus.

" Take your tickets, sir, or you will lose the train, and perhaps your horse too," said a bystander.

Finny threw down two sovereigns, but, as he had insulted the clerk, that official kept him waiting until he had attended to every one else, and the last bell began to ring. He threw down the change and a ticket, and said,

" Look sharp, sir, there's the whistle—they're off."

Finny darted down the platform, and, just as the train was moving, was thrust by a good-natured conductor, who saw a gentleman in pink likely to be left behind, into a first-class carriage, filled, all but one seat, by a party of elegantly-dressed ladies. He had scarcely seated himself, when he heard a shout of " hold on." The train stopped with a jerk that nearly threw Mr. Rashly into the lap of his opposite neighbour, the door of the carriage was opened, and a voice—it was the voice of the impudent clerk—ordered the conductor to " turn that chap out into a

second-class carriage, and report him for trying to impose on the company, when he got to Downham station."

Finny did not stop to expostulate—he was too much horrified—but was paraded along the whole line of carriages to the one nearest the engine; the clerk at his side taking care that every body, who was anxiously inquiring if any thing was wrong, should know that he, Finnikin Rashly, had taken a second-class ticket, and got into a first-class carriage.

"Now write to *The Times*," said the clerk, "if you dare. Go on."

"Infernal shabby!"

"Low in the extreme."

These remarks were uttered by two men, in whom, by the fading light of a November day at five o'clock, p.m., Finnikin recognised the grooms of Lord Lumberly and Major Fleet.

He entered upon an explanation of the mistake he had made, but not one word expressive either of belief or disbelief of his assertions could he elicit from his truly aristocratic companions. They treated him with

silent disdain, and then began a whispered conversation about something or other, which he could not hear for the rattling of the train, as coolly as if he were not addressing them. He told them "they were two impudent fellows, and that he should report them to their masters in the field on the morrow;" but they bore it very philosophically.

Away dashed the train, rattle, rattle, whiz-fiz, whirrh-whirrh, whistle-whirrh; and by the time it stopped at the first station Finny discovered that he was excessively cold, and that he had left his gloves and shawl-wrapper in the pocket of the great-coat which he had humanely strapped upon the gray's *lines*. It began to rain too, and sit where he would, in the back or front, middle or either side, it dashed over him with a sharpness that he had never experienced before.

The conductor called out the name of the station. Up jumped Finnikin. "Now, sir, look sharp—jump out, or you'll be carried on."

"I don't get out here—I want to borrow a great-coat and get a glass of brandy," said Finny.

"All right—go on," said the conductor.

Whew-whew! went the whistle, and away they went again, tearing poor Finny along at the rate of forty miles an hour, with his teeth rattling against each other as fast and almost as loud as the wheels of the carriages.

How happy he was when he heard a man cry out, "Down—ham—Down—ham," and saw, by the light of a lantern, which he carried in his hand, the two grooms alight. He was so benumbed by the rain and cold that he could scarcely stand upon the platform, and his teeth chattered so much that he had great difficulty in explaining to the porters that he had had a horse with him when he started.

"All right, sir, horse-box coming off here. Keep an eye on that kiddy in pink—he tried to bilk us at Paddington," said the conductor, as he jumped into his box, and called out to the engineer, "Go on."

"Ticket, sir," said the porter, moving his bull's-eye up and down so that he might examine the "kiddy" accurately by its light.

Finnikin searched every pocket, but to no

purpose. Either his hands were so benumbed that he could not feel the ticket, or else he had lost it.

"I paid one pound ten and nine for me and my horse, as those two servants can certify," said Finny.

"Here, Tom and Harry," said the porter, speaking as familiarly to the *swell* grooms as if they were nobodies, "this 'ere chap says you saw him pay the mopusses for his ticket."

"I'll tell you what, Bobby, we saw him do nothing of the sort — he's a *do* — don't you believe him on his Bible oath," said one of them, quite condescendingly.

"You must walk into the office, sir," said the porter, catching a firm hold of the wet collar of the late pink, now a deep maroon.

Finny was led over the line into a nice warm room, where he saw a gentlemanly-looking young man, sitting with his legs one on each side of a large stove fire, and reading a book, evidently a well-thummed novel or romance.

"If you please, Mr. Long, here's a gent as *says* he's lost his ticket," said the porter.

"He must pay here. Where does he come from? Confound him, he has interrupted me in the midst of the most interesting —"

"If you please, sir, he's got a horse in the box."

"Then pound him till he pays his fare."

"And the conductor told me to keep an eye on him, for he was a kiddy, and tried to bilk him at Paddington."

"Then pound him and the horse too," said Mr. Long, quietly going on with his reading, without even looking up at poor Rashly.

"I am a gentleman, sir, I assure you—"

"Then behave as such, and fork out the amount of your fare," said Mr. Long.

"Excuse me, Mr. Long," said a little man, stepping into the office, "I think there must be a mistake. The gentleman's in his pink, and has got a really spicy-looking tit in the horse-box, and Tom and Harry, Lumberly and Fleet's grooms, was a bursting with laughter when they walked off with their master's horses."

"Well, Ben, if that's the case, let us inquire a little further," said Mr. Long, laying

down his book, and eyeing Mr. Finnikin closely but not rudely. "You had better feel in your pockets again, sir," he said, when he had listened to the account of the clerk's conduct and the mistake at Paddington.

Finnikin did so, but in vain. No ticket there.

"Try your hat, sir," said Ben.

The hint was a good one, for no sooner had he lifted it from his head than the ticket fell to the ground. He had put it for safety inside the leather lining. So much pleased was he with the sagacity of Ben that he first gave him a shilling, and then examined his features, his person, and dress.

He saw a very little man, with a very stolid-looking face, but sharp, twinkling eyes. He was dressed in a long green cut-away coat, which fitted him so much too much that the skirts reached his heels, and the sleeves would have obscured his hands had he not turned the cuffs up to his elbows. His waistcoat was as much too small for him as his coat was too large, and scarcely met a huge pair of loose leather breeches to which

were attached, by bits of white tape, an enormous pair of patent leather jack-boots. A worn-out black stock, with a waterfall front, in which was displayed a large cairngourm brooch, was about his neck, and on his head he wore a very broad-brimmed hat, so much too large for him that he was obliged to deposit his pocket-handkerchief inside it to keep it firmly in its place.

The fact was that poor Ben, who had seen better times as a groom and gentleman's servant, was now down in the world, and depending for his support on picking up a precarious living by *cadding* at the Downham station, and for his dress on the kindness of those who had known him in his prosperity. One gave him a hat, another a coat, and so disfigured him that Ben generally looked more like a Guy Faux than a groom.

Ben eyed the shilling—wetted it with his lips, to indicate that it was the first he had earned that day—pocketed it with a wink at Mr. Long, and then proffered his services to the gentleman, provided he had no servant to

meet him, and see him and his horse racke up and littered down for the night.

"Have you an hotel or an inn anywhere near, my fine fellow?" said Finnikin, recovering his impudence with his spirits, "because, if I *have* a prejudice, it is against standing half perished in wet clothes, and losing a valuable horse by allowing him to take cold."

"No hotel, no inn, sir, nigher than four mile and a quarter, and through roads a foot deep in mud," said Ben.

Finny shuddered.

"But we've a tavern here—the Railroad Tavern — with the best accommodation for man and horse to be found anywhere."

"Then lead on, and tell the porter to bring my hunter after me, my fine fellow."

"Excuse me, *you* follow the porter and *I'll* bring the horse. I understand leading horses — and asses," said Ben, *sotto voce*, winking at Mr. Long.

Finnikin followed the porter, who, either from regret at having suspected the gentleman to be no gentleman, but a defrauder of

the railroad revenues, or from having seen the shilling handed over to Ben for discovering the lost ticket, was remarkably civil, and took pains to point out, by the rays of his bull's-eye lantern, several large puddles and heaps of muck, left there as if on purpose to entrap travellers, or to show them the superiority of metals over mud. After several very narrow escapes of being in knee-deep, they managed to reach a long, low, wooden building, intended to represent a Swiss cottage. This was dignified with the name of the Railway Tavern, and bore for its sign an engine and tender.

"Landlord, show a light," said the porter; "here's a gentleman hunter wants a bed for himself and his horse."

"Hang me, my fine fellow, but you're a civil chap, after all; there's a shilling for *you*," said Finnikin.

"Much obliged, sir, but it's against our rules to take *money*," said the porter; "but, if you were to order half a gallon of beer, of course that an't money, and consequently not against the rules."

"Landlord, give this good fellow here half a gallon of ale, and put it in my bill," said Finny, very much pleased at this opportunity of astonishing the company in the little bar-parlour into which he was ushered. "Of course I can sleep here to-night?"

"You can have a bed, sir, certainly; but, as to sleeping, that depends entirely on yourself," replied the landlord.

Mr. Rashly thought that this was meant for rudeness, but when he looked at the funny face of the host, he was convinced it was only waggishness.

"And my horse?"

"We'll make a chancellor of him, and install him immediately, as they do at Oxford."

"Bravo, Joe Digger! you always was a queer one," said one of the company, bursting out into a loud laugh, in which all the rest joined.

Mr. Digger did not smile externally, but by the play of the fat on his ribs it was clear he was enjoying his own joke to himself.

"Ever hunt in this country *before*, sir?" said Joe.

"Never before," said Finnikin.

"Then you must mind, and not hunt *behind*, sir, for we're fast about here."

Again was Mr. Digger's stale joke most abundantly applauded by his admirers, and he could have cut many more equally as novel, had he not perceived that his guest did not quite relish a joke at his own expense.

"Mistress," he called out to his wife, "make up a good fire up stairs directly—here's a gentleman wants a *private* room, although we keep a *public* house."

Laughter again and louder than ever. Joe could have bitten his tongue off, for he really did not mean to be funny then. Fortunately he was relieved by the entrance of Ben, who announced the safe deposition of the gray in his stable, and requested to know how he was to be fed.

"By a spoon," said Joe, "and that's yourself."

As Ben was what is termed a butt—and so he was, for he was always full of beer when he could get it—he, of course, pretended to be very much annoyed at the joke,

and added so greatly to the harmony of the evening, that several mugs were put into his hand at once.

"Excuse me, sir, but do you know why our Ben here is *not* like a clown in the ring?" said Mr. Digger, addressing Finny.

Finny shook his head, to imply his ignorance.

"Why, because he never *cuts a mug*."

This was irresistible. It was understood by all. The laughter was overpowering, and Finny was glad to follow his hostess into the upper room, which was pronounced to be ready for his reception. A comfortable sofa before a blazing fire made our little friend quite happy. He took off his coat, hung it over a chair before the blaze, and ordered tea and toast. It was brought up, accompanied by a delicious mutton-chop, and, when he had finished his meal, and resumed his thoroughly-dried pink, now a pink again, he resolved to have one cigar, and one glass of something warm, and then prudently retire for the night.

The landlord executed the order in person.

Finny examined the cigar to see if it was a real Havannah. He took a spill, and placed it in the blazing flame of the fire to light it —to his horror a voice came down the chimney, and said distinctly,

"It's only a British."

"Eh—what was that?" said Finny, looking Joe hard in the face.

A voice, which seemed to come from under the sofa, said, "Made in the Minories."

"I will inquire into the meaning of this," said Mr. Digger. "I will not have my cigars calumniated."

Finnikin felt very miserable when he was left alone. He had a notion that the house was haunted, and his notion was confirmed by hearing the sounds of some man or beast in the last agonies of death under the window-curtains of the room. He stared for some five minutes, and then, with the courage of despair, ran to the curtains, and threw them aside. Nothing was to be seen. He sat down again, took a deep draught of brandy-and-water, and was rekindling his cigar, when a voice, just behind him, whispered,

"That's British too—Betts's five B's."

This was unendurable. He threw open the door, and ran down stairs into the bar-parlour, which he found deserted by every one but Ben and his host, who, when they had been informed of the causes of his fear, assured him, with serious looks, that what he mistook for voices was nothing but the sounds caused by the wind playing about a wooden building.

"Then bring my glass and cigar down here, for, if I *have* a prejudice, it is against sitting alone, and listening to the wind," said Finny.

Ben went up to fetch the luxuries, and, while he was gone, the voice of a man in the cellar below called out, "Hilloh, Joe, you've locked me *in*, and the barrel's *out*."

"Who are you?" asked Joe.

The voice replied, "Come and see, for I shall be eaten up by cats, rats, dogs, and pigs; the cellar's full of them."

And, sure enough, such an uproar of the mewings of cats, the squeaking of rats, the barking of dogs, and grunting of pigs was heard, as made the poor landlord so frightened,

that he begged of his guest to light him down to the cellar, in order to see what was the matter.

Finnikin would have refused point-blank, but, being in pink, and having been told that "a man in pink should never refuse anything," he seized the poker in one hand, and a candle in the other, and boldly rushed after the landlord. The cellar-door was thrown open, and there they found—nobody—no cats, rats, dogs, or pigs.

"Come, come, Mr. Digger," said some one at the top of the cellar-stairs, "no more of your tricks upon travellers. It's all very well to terrify the bumpkins, but you shall not alarm strange gentlemen for your own gratification."

"Drabbit it!" said Joe; "that Mr. Long is always spoiling sport. Don't be offended or alarmed. I am a bit of a ventriloquist—learnt it, to amuse the gownsmen, from one Mr. Matthews, who comed down to Oxford, where I was born and bred, which accounts for my good manners."

Finny was too much relieved to feel angry.

He cordially told Joe that he forgave him, and followed him into the bar-parlour, where he found Mr. Long, who had not to go to office again until the mail-train down was due, reading the everlasting novel by the light of a dip candle. Could Finny do less than thank him for having exonerated his mind of its fear? No. He did so most condescendingly, and offered to treat him with a cigar and anything he chose.

Mr. Long took a cigar, or *weed*, as he called it, and a small glass of small ale. He then resumed his book as coolly as if his entertainer ought not to have been entertained in his turn by the agreeable remarks of the consumer of his cigar and beer. Ben sat in the bar-parlour, but "below the salt," to indicate he was only there by sufferance. Finny, having no one else to converse with, made inquiries as to how his horse had fared, and whether he was properly clothed; and then put several queries as to the spot at which the hounds were to meet, and the probability of a find. Mr. Long finished the third volume and his cigar at the same moment, and not

having vol. i. of a new work at hand obligingly entered into conversation with Mr. Rashly, and, as they got on but slowly, ordered Joe to enliven them by giving them a song, and some further specimens of his ventriloquizing powers. Joe sang a capital song, and then made poor Finny believe that one of the legs of the chair on which he was sitting was being amputated by a handsaw. Then he fancied a pig was being *rung* under the table, and next that a blackbird and a lark were whistling and carolling from the salt-box by the fireside.

It was very cleverly done; but, instead of pleasing Finny, although he knew it was mere deception, it alarmed him; for he thought that as soon as he got to bed his waggish host would prevent him going to sleep by some further, and probably more discordant, exhibitions of his skill. He resolved not to go to bed until his host was tired out. But how was he to amuse himself? He was determined not to resort to more cigars and liquids, for he had not forgotten the lesson taught him by the young medicals who had shaved

off his capillary excrescences. He suggested to Mr. Long a game at chess or drafts, or even dominoes, but that young gentleman owned his ignorance of those games, and pronounced them very slow work.

"Could he play at cards?"—of course he could—but Joe Digger said cards were unlawful, and that he had not a pack in the house. Mr. Long told him not to make a fool of himself; and, slipping his hand into a pocket in the inside of his coat-tails, produced a pack of Hunt's best; and when Mr. Finnikin confessed that he knew nothing of put, or brag, or blind-hookey, and could only play a very little at whist or cribbage, Mr. Long slipped his left hand into his left coat-tail, and extracted a very capital cribbage-board.

The game began merely for cigars and ale. Joe Digger and Ben sat and looked on. Finnikin was unlucky; for, although he held good cards, by some means he could not score so many as his opponent. At the end of every game Joe put a fresh cigar and a fresh glass of ale beside each gentleman, and, going up to

a huge black board with a piece of white chalk in his hand, made a cross opposite to a large P. G., which was meant to be the bill of the pink gentleman. Finnikin continued to lose, and the cigars and glasses of ale accumulated so fast, that he begged and entreated the landlord and his man Ben to assist in their consumption. After several more games, Finny owned his inferiority, and refused to play any more. Mr. Long heard the bell and whistle, announcing the down mail, and rushed to the office, saying he would join them again as soon as he could.

"Clever chap that!" said Finnikin.

"And so he ought to be," said Joe, "at cribbage. You see he has a deal of spare time between the trains, and can't always get books from the circulating; so he amuses himself by playing at cribbage by himself for hours together. 'Fore peg and deal's his delight."

Finny thought he had better retire for the night before Mr. Long's return, for fear he should insist on "giving him his revenge;" and having ordered Ben to see his boots and

everything in perfect trim, and to call him in time for breakfast, went to bed—but not before he had exacted a solemn promise from his facetious landlord that he would give him no further proofs of his skill in imitating all sorts of animals and noises.

Mr. Long, on his return, pronounced Finnikin to be "a muff, and no mistake." He then smoked some four-and-twenty cigars with Joe and Ben, with ales corresponding in number to the chalks on the board, and walked to his lodgings as calmly and soberly as—if he was used to it.

Ben went to his hayloft, and wished he could meet with such "a muff" every day in every week.

Finny passed a quiet night, woke without a headache, made an excellent breakfast, mounted the gray, "togged out," as he termed it, to his own satisfaction, and followed a gentleman in a quiet Oxford-mixture coat, drabs, and top-boots, who, Ben assured him, would show him the way to the cover where the hounds were to meet. Finny felt rather pleased to see Mr. Long eye him with

admiring looks as he crossed the bridge, but his pleasure was soon ended when he got to the foot of the said bridge, for the road, cut up by conveying heavy goods to the rail, was worse than a ploughed field, and the gray, having been used to the level hard roads round town, did not like being knee-deep in mud. In his efforts to escape from it, he plunged and kicked so strenuously, that he nearly unseated his rider, and completely smothered him with dirt.

Finny had a great mind to turn back and go home by the first train—but what would Mr. Long, Joe, and Ben think? What would Miss Isabella Canterwell say? He, for a moment, resolved to scorn the sneers of the trio, and to invent a run to amuse the lady; but the farmer, who rode by his side, highly amused, assured him that they should soon turn into a green lane and ride on good turf. His words were true, and they cantered on together very pleasantly until they arrived at the cover's side, where a field of some twenty or thirty men were assembled, busily engaged in mounting hunters, and lighting cigars,

and making other preparations for drawing the gorse.

Finny was quite delighted while the hounds were in cover—it was so pleasant to see the horses and men about him, and to hear their anticipations of a sure find and a breast-high scent. Presently, an old hound opened, and the pack quickly joined him. One large bunch of high furze seemed *chevaux-de-frised* with their erected sterns, and all at once such a crash and such a burst were heard as Finny had never dreamed of.

The fox had broken cover with the pack well upon him, and had bravely taken to the open, over a line that indicated he meant to try his speed with his pursuers. A loud shout of "Gone away! Forward there!" reached Finny's ears, the gray sprang almost from under him, and went off at a frightful pace, amidst a ruck of men trying for a good place. As they were on the side of a hill on downy land, with few or no fences to stop them, for the first five minutes the pace was more like a race than a hunt, and Finny kept

his seat well, and would have enjoyed it, but, somehow or other, he could neither see nor hear anything distinctly, and the wind took away his breath. As to where the hounds were, or what they were doing, except barking, as he would have termed it, he had not the remotest conception. Still on he went, until he found himself violently jerked up into the air, and coming down into his saddle again, unpleasantly. Then he lost one stirrup, and found himself holding on by the clip of his knees. At last, a horrid large brook appeared before him, over which, to his dismay, his gray, which was still leading, seemed to mean bounding. He tried to check him. He might as well have tried to stop an avalanche or a drunken cabman. Over went the gallant gray—on—on—on—head and tail up—but where was his rider? at the very bottom of Pinky Brook—so called from being frequently made the deposit of "gents in pink."

Finny emerged to the surface half-drowned with water and mud. As soon as he could scoop the slush and duckweed out of his

eyes, he beheld, as he floated on his back, all the field, one after another, fly over him. He expected every one of them to come in right a-top of him, and he dived convulsively to escape the horrible fate that he thought awaited him. All however got safe over him, but not one stopped to aid him. He did think he heard one good Samaritan cry out, "Stop his horse!—I should like to buy him," but he heard no more. He was borne into a sort of eddy, in which he turned and twisted about, until he began to feel a choking sensation. He kicked and spluttered, tried to cry for help, felt his mouth gradually fill with water, and, after seeing pleasing visions of green meadows and rivers fringed with flowery banks, went down.

"Deary me," said Mrs. Rashly, looking at a watch by her side, "I wonder dear Finnikin is not returned. It is ten o'clock, and he should be sure to have got the brush, as he called the tail, and be off home in the six o'clock train. I hope nothing is amiss—

horses will tumble down, let a young man ride ever so well."

"Nonsense, mamma," said Miss Letty; "he's very likely gone to dine with some of his noble friends, after his hard day's hunting: you know fox-hunters never part without dining all together at the nearest nobleman's house."

"He must have had a delightful day," said Miss Issy Canterwell, rather smiling than not at her dear friend's remark. "A gray, dull morning, with a mild wind, and that in the right quarter, they must have found early, and had a long run. I make no doubt he is snugly enough *in* somewhere or another."

"He may be at the stables," said Mrs. Rashly; "Peter shall run and see."

Peter did run and see—Jem, who told him to "go back and tell the old lady to rack herself up for the night, for the chances were all in favour of her not seeing her son that night. Such a scenting day as that had been might lead a man such a chace that he might not know where he was."

Mrs. Rashly sat up until the clock had struck twelve, and then retired, but could not sleep, so nervous and fidgety was she about the fate of her dear boy. She thought over everything she had ever read of hunting, from the days of that fatal chace, whence we derive the schoolboy phrase, *chevying*, up to the chace of the stag on Easter Monday, and conjured up in her mind's eye the image of her son suffering from every one of the accidents to which aspirants after *venerie* are liable. Gladly did she hail the daylight, and still more gladly did she join her daughter and her young friend at the breakfast-table, that she might express her fears to them, and so obtain their sympathy.

Not a bit of it. Miss Letty attributed her mother's restlessness to indigestion, the result of under-toasted muffins and week negus as a bumper at parting. Miss Canterwell attributed her alarms to nightmare, arising from too much anxiety about a horse.

Mrs. Rashly, poor soul! was too much affected at the levity displayed by both to

say a word more about her presentiments of evil, so she rang the bell, and desired Peter to bring up the tea-urn.

Peter obeyed, and with the hissing instrument he brought up the morning paper and a very pale face. He trembled so that he could scarcely set the urn upon its rug, and when he had done so he said, "Thank 'even hit's no wus!"

"He's dead!—I know he is!—ah—oh—eugh!" screamed Mrs. Rashly.

"Not dead—no—" said Peter.

"A fracture — simple or compound — which? Speak out, you little wretch?" said Miss Letty.

"Is your master injured?—has he had a fall?—is he seriously wounded?" said Miss Canterwell.

"No, miss, he ain't—he's *drownded!*" said Peter, looking whiter than he did before.

Mrs. Rashly and her daughter went into a variety of hysterics; the former into pure unmistakeables, the latter into the partly assumed. Miss Issy summoned her maid to attend upon Mrs. Rashly, leaving Letty, whom

she pretty well *knew*, to kick as frantically as she pleased on the sofa, while she took the ghastly Peter into the back room, and questioned him, calmly and firmly, as to the genuineness and authenticity of the information he had obtained about his master's fate.

"If you please, miss," began Peter, "as I was hirening out the paper, my eyes lighted on—"

"Gracious! is it really true then?" asked Miss Canterwell.

"There ain't no names mentioned," said Peter, "but who as knowed or ever seed master, could mistake the description of his precious person and pretty pink?"

Miss Canterwell seized the paper, and, looking at the paragraph pointed out by the tiger's thumb, read—

"*Mysterious and probably-by-this-time-fatal Occurrence.*—The Old Wiltshire hounds had a very splendid run yesterday. They met near Downham station. A full field was in attendance, amongst whom we noticed the

owner of the noble pack, and all the gentry around, besides a large sprinkling of Oxford men. They found early in Heathy Gorse. Pug was a bold one, and took the open country; after a severe run of forty-five minutes and three quarters, he was run into in gallant style near Cromley Clumps. The distance run is calculated by good judges at thirty miles, two furlongs, and one perch, and only three were up at the death, among whom we noticed the head huntsman and the two whippers-in; all the rest were nowhere, except one—a young gentleman—who was found by the merest chance by a peasant in search of that healthy vegetable, water-cresses, in a brook called Hinkey, Winkey, or Pinkey, we could not ascertain which. He is of small figure, though rather given to *embonpoint* about the waistband of what delicacy forbids us to name. His face is rather what is called chubby, from a supposed resemblance to what piscatorial gents call the chub or chad. His *cheveux*, or head of hair, rather of the kind called whitey-brown —as applied by the stationers' company to

textures of a brownish-white tint. His dress consists of a scarlet hunting frock cut *à la chasse*, a striped vest, white corded belows, and topped boots. Around his neck was an exceedingly neat *schal à l'œil d'oiseaux*, in the front of which is placed a brooch or pin, having at its summit a very correct representation of the animal, or, to use a sporting phrase, vermin, which doubtless caused the melancholy situation in which we found him —a fox—the *vulpes* of Buffon.

" When we saw him, through the kindness of a most respectable person who keeps the inn at Downham station, a pretty building, *en Suisse*, called the Railway Tavern, where chops and civility may be had in perfection, we found him lying on a sofa, surrounded by a medical man, who was applying brandy *ad libitum* to his *fauces*. While we assisted at the operation, the medical attendant kindly explained that he would have been resuscitated in less than no time had it not been for the ignorance of the countryman, who, in accordance with the vulgar views of persons in his line of life, suspended him in the air by his

topped-boots to let the water run out of his mouth. Having done all we could in dispensing the brandy, we sought all the information we could from an individual apparently of superior talents to his dress, called Ben—the well-known diminutive of Benjamin. He stated, on his examination, and over a pint of ale, that the departed ["Oh gracious!" said Miss Canterwell—"Oh my," said Peter, "but go on, do ye, miss"] came down by yesterday's train in a horse-box, with a gray hunting nag, longish about the pasterns (or lower legs), and rather a rat-tail. That he had one chop and a cup of tea, played a few games at whist with a gent called Long, or Short, and, after a few cigars and a little mild ale, retired to seek that repose so welcome to the weary traveller. Alas! when he closed his eyes—we forgot to mention that they, like his horse, are grays—how little did he think that he should so soon close them for ever! As he could not speak, we could not learn his name, either family or baptismal, from himself, and when we instituted a search in his hat and pockets we found nothing in them

but a ticket marked Christy's best, and twelve and ninepence in silver and copper money, which induces the host, Mr. Joseph Digger, and Mr. Long or Short, to believe that the peasant must either have robbed him or shaken the rest of his money out of his pockets with the water, as his score amounted to nearly treble the sum found upon him.

"We open our despatch to say, that the surgeon has just announced that he has sure hopes of his recovery, as he has just asked for another cigar, and begged to know how many he was to peg for two fives, a king, and a queen. We hope this hurried account—for you can't be too fast for the rail—will not give any uneasiness to the friends or relations of the unfortunate youth."

"Courage, Peter, courage!—depend upon it, your master is alive and well. He has had a ducking, no doubt, but be assured he is not drowned."

"Of course, I am not," said Mr. Finnikin Rashly, entering the room, ghastly pale; "I've been thoroughly soaked though, I must say; and, if I *have* a peculiar aversion to any

thing, it is to being in a brook for a quarter of an hour after a splendid run."

"And where is the gray?" said Peter.

"Detained by a cursed impudent fellow and a dirty doctor for a thirty-three shilling tavern bill, and a guinea fee at Downham station."

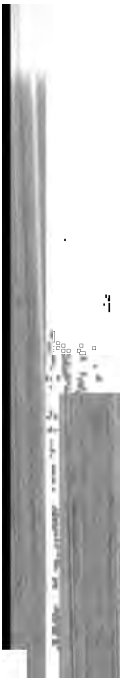
"Never mind the money, my dear boy," said Mrs. Rashly, clasping him in her arms. "I'll find that. I've got *you* safe—that is all I care for—only promise me one thing."

"Name it, mother."

"Never to go hunting again."

"Rely on it, mamma," said Mr. Finnikin Rashly. "If I *have* an aversion, it is decidedly against joining the first meeting of the season."

END OF VOL. II.



Frederick Shoberl, Junior, Printer to His Royal Highness
51, Rupert Street, Haymarket, London.

GREAT TOM OF OXFORD.

CHAPTER XVI.

NICK CROXTEAD, THE LAW-EVADER.

Every child at beholding him shiver'd with dread,
And screamed as he turned away quick;
Not an old woman saw him, but, raising her head,
Dropp'd a bead, made a cross on her wrinkles and said,
Lord keep me from ugly Old Nick!
SOUTHEY'S "PIOUS PAINTER."

The depressing effects of a decided wet day upon the spirits—animal spirits I was about to write, but there are no such things as vegetable spirits, so there cannot be any doubt about the nature of the spirits to which I allude—every body has experienced. At no period, however, is the effect of a rainy day so completely damping—except when it deprives

you of a long-promised *tête-à-tête* walk with your "oh no, I never mention her"—as when you have rushed from the high pressure of business, and the murkiness of a town, to some quiet retreat where you have made up your mind to enjoy all sorts of out-of-door amusements, and, like Sir Dugald, provender yourself with such hearty meals of sweet, pure air as shall ensure you against a scanty supply for some time to come.

I have often remarked—to myself—that when you have, for any long time, made up your mind to enjoy any thing very particularly, something or other is sure to occur to balk your pleasing anticipations, and this I imagine was the foundation of the proverb that "anticipation is better than enjoyment." Have you never been invited, sir, by some very intimate friend, some Tom, Dick, or Harry, to dine with him, and meet a very jolly party, whose names are familiar to you, as belonging to the best joke-crackers of the day, and enjoyed the flavour of the excellent wines you knew he must provide for them, and got your cachinnatory muscles in readiness to laugh at

the wit which is expected in return for the wine—in anticipation?—ay, and even got up a few Joe Millers yourself in order not to be thought a remarkably slow coach? Well; what is the result? You go prepared to praise the champagne and Lafitte, and to establish your character as a good listener. The wine is too cold or too hot; not enough or too much *up*. The turbot is boiled to a jelly, or the salmon, like a Frenchman, is reluctant to quit its Bony-part from not having been long enough in hot water. Every thing goes wrong, and no one can tell why or wherefore. As far as the stomach is concerned, you had done better to stay at home and enjoy your chop and concomitant pint of port.

But, then, your mental feast! Pooh! the principal wit has received an interim invite to some grander entertainment, and put your friend off under some vile excuse. The second fiddle, the punster, won't let off the puns with which he came charged, because the wit is not present to be shot at by him, and give a second report of the puns in his club.

The comic singer is sure to be suffering from a severe cold, and the gentleman that "gives imitations" upon most occasions won't even sell them for claret, under the plea of an attack of bronchitis. Your friend looks glum, and you endeavour to set the pot of fun boiling by telling one of the very best stories of the store which you have laid up for the occasion. A quiet smileless stare, and a low remark of "how very stale!" is the result, and down goes the thermometer of your fun some degrees below zero. How happy you feel when coffee has been handed round, and you can escape without giving offence! There is nothing like improvising a party, getting it up *à la minute.* "Come and dine with me; I do not know what is in the house; but come along." Say so to every friend you meet, and never mind the black looks of your wife or housekeeper; give them the best you have, with a glass of good wine, and a laughing hearty welcome, and rely upon it you will not fail to have a very jolly party,—without anticipation.

The ladies must allow that many balls and

concerts at which they have anticipated much pleasure have passed off heavily, and most inharmoniously, whereas a quadrille suddenly got up on the carpet, or a glee and a chorus knocked up at a chance meeting, have proved unexpectedly pleasant and agreeable. As to long projected pic-nics, they are proverbially certain to produce a fall of the barometer.

Still these are but minor ills; disappointments that leave but a day's sting behind them; the venom of which is dissipated by a mere grumbling at them with some of your fellow-sufferers. The real evil is experienced when, to relieve the wearied body or the over worked brain, you seek the air of the country, and think to enjoy exercise in the green fields, or in the bright waters beneath a cloudless sky, and when you have arrived at your destination find yourself a close prisoner at your inn or your friend's house; in spite of offers of impenetrable mackintoshes, water-boots, and capacious umbrellas.

You may well ask the meaning of this discussion on rainy weather and its annoyances;

I can only reply that my story led me to it, and that your imaginary query will lead me back to my story.

I do love the river's brink and the ocean's shore; and whenever I wish to escape from the toils or the pleasures of the town, I generally put myself and a very small carpet-bag on board any steamer that may happen to be starting from her moorings at London Bridge when I happen to arrive there. Instead of going to any fashionable watering-place or any city of crowds between Gravesend and Grand Cairo, where you are sure to see familiar faces and get dragged into London life out of town, I keep a look-out for some snug little retreat, and if I see one that suits my fancy, or that I fancy will suit it, I politely request the skipper to hoist a signal for a boat, pay him his whole fare, which is nothing but fair, and go ashore. Sometimes I make a lucky hit, and enjoy myself vastly; at other times I find myself in a wretched place without any thing to amuse or interest me, and have nothing to do but to get through the evening and the night as well as I can,

and then betake myself to some other locality on the following morning.

Last summer I boarded a steamer, bound, as I afterwards found, for Dover, Deal, and Ramsgate, and as she was a fine, commodious, fast-sailing boat, I had almost resolved to visit the most distant of her places of call, and then cross over to the opposite coast; but, as we steamed along, one of the passengers pointed out to me a point of land on her larboard-bow as one of the flattest and most miserable spots he had ever seen. He wondered how any body could live in such a place, and professed to entertain a serious doubt whether the inhabitants ever saw a visiter come amongst them.

I like to astonish people; so, when I had learnt from the fastidious gentleman that the flat, low, aguish-looking island was called Deadman's Ness, I quietly and mendaciously told him that that was the place of my destination, the very spot which I had selected to pass a few pleasant days in.

In order to make my story good, I left him shrugging his shoulders and eyeing me with

a look of pity, mingled with surprise, at my bad taste, to tell the captain to hoist a flag as a signal for a boat to put off to convey me ashore.

It was speedily noticed, and a little peter-boat hoisted her spritsail, and was quickly alongside. I paid my fare, took my leave of my communicative acquaintance, and, with my carpet-bag in my hand, seated myself in the space near the well of the peter-boat, which was graced with the name of a cabin by its owner and occupier.

As the wind had been favourable for the boat to leave Deadman's Ness and reach the steamer, of course it was unfavourable for the boat to leave the steamer and reach the Ness. We had to tack I do not know how many times before we gained a clear sight of the little landing-place for which we were making, and when I saw it and the small public-house which stood close to it, and was told that it was the only place of entertainment for strangers on the island, I began to regret the probable sacrifice of an evening and a night's comforts, for the mere purpose of astonishing

a perfect stranger. Regrets, however, were useless then, and I endeavoured to console myself by thinking that, if the accommodations were bad at the little inn, I could hire a boat and sail elsewhere, or take my carpet-bag in hand, and get ferried over to the main land, and walk to the nearest town, which my conveyer in the peter-boat assured me was not above ten miles distant.

I had been so much occupied in surveying the land before me, that I had not thought of raising my eyes to the skies above me, nor was I aware that a bright clear morning had been succeeded by a cloudy, thick, hazy noon, until a heavy drop of rain fell upon my hand. I immediately looked up, and before I could ask whether the day was likely to prove unfavourable, a faint flash, succeeded by the rumbling of distant thunder, told me that we were about to have a storm. My boatman, as we were not above a quarter of a mile from the land, brailed up his spritsail and lowered his foresail; and, when his canvas was all made snug, put out his oars, and pulled vigorously ashore. We reached the land just as the rain

began to fall in torrents, the lightning to gleam more vividly, and the thunder to proclaim, by its increased loudness, that the storm was approaching us more closely.

A few steps enabled me to reach "The Fish," and a few words to explain to its landlady that I wished for some refreshment and accommodation for the night. I was shown into a neat sitting-room, and then into a clean, though very minute bedroom above, which I was informed was at my service. This part of the arrangement was quite satisfactory; and when a nice dish of flounders, delicately fried, and a few slices of bacon, flanked by delicious fresh eggs, made their appearance, I was quite reconciled to my fate. I ate my bacon in the midst of the thunder-storm, without giving vent to the exclamation which a certain Israelite is reported to have uttered under the same unpropitious circumstances.

After my meal was ended, I was furnished with some excellent grog and tobacco. Wine, of course, I never dreamed of asking for in such a spot and such a house. I am no great

smoker or grog-consumer, but I thought that a pipe and a glass would serve to pass away the time until the storm should have passed away, and enabled me to seek a few hours enjoyment in the open air. So I filled and lighted my tube, mixed my tumbler, and, careless whether or not the spirits or the weed had paid duty to government, established a cloud of my own, which soon vied in density with the vapours without.

The storm passed over, and the last distant clap of thunder was heard as I struck the ashes out of my pipe. I would not fill again, for I expected, as the thunder had ceased, that the rain would shortly cease too. In this I was deceived, and—need I say it?—disappointed. It ceased to *pour* with rain, it is true, but the heavy, dashing, splashing rain, was succeeded by a steady falling of moisture, which, from the leaden hue of the clouds, seemed likely to last for hours, and so it did.

What was to be done?—read? There was not a book in the house. I had, it is true, my pocket Horace, and my Elzevir Pindar in my pocket, but I knew their odes by heart.

Write? I had materials, it is equally true, but I was not "i' the vein" to use them. After sitting for some time, thinking of Washington Irving's wet day, and longing for a cock on a heap of manure, or a disconsolate sparrow to gaze upon and sympathize with, I did see a skylark attempt to soar above the clouds, but, after he had flown a little way, and uttered a twit-twit or two, his spirits were damped. He closed his wings, and fell suddenly to the ground. He alighted on the sand and run his head into a tuft of rushes, which was the only vegetable, save and except a straggling furze-bush or two which grew upon the flat shore, seemingly resolved to seek for safety and for succour in its scanty protection.

The only remedy in a case like mine, that I have as yet discovered, is to summon the landlord, and bribe him with unlimited offers of glasses of grog, to afford you the pleasure of his company. I did so upon this occasion, but was informed by his wife that he had not yet returned from fishing. I was delighted to hear her add that she expected him before

very long, as the tide had already turned, and would speedily cover the low, flat shore, which was at present bare for some half mile. It was an amusement to me to watch the tiny waves as they came tumbling in, and filled pool after pool; and then there was a stake fixed in the sand, and it relieved me to observe the tide gently rising to its top until it covered it. Lastly, the water reached the hard at which I had landed, and it was great fun to bet with myself how many minutes some particular shaped stone would remain dry. Guess my relief, however, when I saw four little cutter-rigged vessels round the point, and make directly for mine inn. I borrowed an umbrella and went out to meet them, and to inspect their cargoes, which I found consisted entirely of shrimps, on supplying the London market with which the livelihood of the Nessmen chiefly depended.

I introduced myself to the landlord, whom I knew by his wearing that peculiar look which those who have been in the habit of entertaining men and horses invariably wear. I can hardly describe the look; but it is a

sort of mixture of curiosity, deference, and defiance, as much as to imply, "Who are you? I am delighted to see you if you have any money, and are inclined to spend it; but if you have not any, or are stingy with it, you may tramp as soon as you please."

I will not stop to record all that passed between us previously to our sitting down together to enjoy ourselves after a capital supper off that most delicious of all delicious sea-productions, the shrimp. It beats the prawn hollow in my estimation, *if* it be large, fresh, just boiled to a second, well salted, and eaten with good bread and butter and—an appetite.

Fancy us over our supper-*sequiturs;* the smoke ascending from our—pipes, I was going to say; but it would have been wrong, for I was furnished with some most excellent old cheroots, which my landlord undisguisedly told me were smuggled goods; the Hollands grog sending forth its peaty odours, which, being also contraband, amalgamated most readily with the fragrant weed.

"Stranger," said mine host, "I like what

I have seen of you—here is to your good health. Smoke and drink freely, for no headache will follow from enjoying the goods on which the government has not laid its dirty hands, and rely upon it the chalk-marks will not exhaust your purse to wipe them out."

I returned thanks, of course, and perhaps the more courteously from the implied promise that my enjoyments would not prove expensive.

"How do you like Deadman's Ness?" he asked.

"I have seen so little of it," I replied, "and under such an unpropitious atmosphere, that I am unwilling to give an opinion of the little I have seen of it. I can only say that I have found your house and yourself agreeable; and if all the islanders resemble you and the crews of the boats that came in with you, you must be a fine race of men."

"Some people might call that flattery, but I do not," said mine host, rather proudly. "I stand six feet two in my stocking-feet, and yet I am not by any means considered a tall man in the Ness. I am strong, too, and

hardy, and so we are all, for we are early risers, hard-workers, active players, and seldom within doors when there is light enough for us to see to do any thing in the open air; and as for weather—bah! we despise it."

"No ague here, then?" said I.

"The chills—only the chills now and then—but we take preventatives, and seldom suffer."

"What medicines do you take," I inquired, "to guard against its effects?"

Instead of answering my question verbally, he quietly pointed with the end of his pipe to the old Dutch spirit-bottle and the tobacco-dish, and winked.

"You spoke of being active players—what are your sports?"

"It would make rather a long catalogue if I were to mention them all—but as for cricketing, swimming, running, shooting, and drinking, we are open to any challenge that may be sent us. I say drinking—not that we are a drunken set of men, by any means; but the air of the Ness would be unbearable

if we did not set it at defiance by a preventive. To your very good health. No man who has been used to his grog and tobacco from his youth upwards in such a climate as ours, need fear to meet a main-landsman over a bowl and a pipe."

"Do you get good shooting here?" I asked.

"Capital, in the winter season," he answered. "Snipes are always plentiful, and wild-fowl of all sorts resort in great numbers to our sands, and the ditches within our sea-walls. We shrimp all the summer months, and fowl all the winter months. It is our trade, and many a little fortune has been made by it—*and*—"

"I guess," said I; "tubs and bales."

"You are right," said he. "I don't blush to own it. It's all fair to cheat the government, for they tax us pretty heavily, and can afford to lose now and then."

"Is that your fowling-gun?" I inquired, pointing to an elongated cannon, with an enormous bore, which impended over my head by the side of a beam, which seemed almost too slight to support its weight.

"It is, bless her! I call her my Old Nick. She is the very best piece that ever was fired, if you are not afraid to load her heavily, and are strong enough to hold her. She does kick a little, certainly, but she won't knock you down backwards, if you will only stand on one heel when you pull the trigger, and let her spin you round."

I smiled at the pleasant alternative, and asked him how it was that he spoke of the gun as a female, and yet called her by the male appellative of Old Nick.

"Why, she was given to me by Old Nick, and for his sake I call her by his name," said mine host, throwing a look of affection upon the piece, much warmer, I doubt not, than he would have thrown upon his wife.

"Old Nick?" said I. "I presume you do not mean that the gun was bequeathed to to you by—the gentleman in black who sometimes goes by that name on the mainland?"

"Bah!" said he. "I mean Old Nicholas Croxtead, of course."

"And who," I asked, "was he?"

"Never heard of Nick Croxtead?"

I nodded a negative.

"Well! I *am* surprised! You must have come from a good ways off not to have heard of *him*—but you must have heard of his name, it was so very well known."

I assured him that I had not, and begged him to enlighten my ignorance of the individual by giving me an insight into his character.

"Well—to think that any man having the appearance of a gentleman should not have even heard of Nick Croxtead! I could not have believed it possible!—but light another cheroot—they came direct from Bengal—and fill another glass—the tub that grog came out of never felt a dipping-stick within it—and I will give you a slight sketch of Old Nick."

I did as I was requested, and listened to the following strange story:

"You must know," commenced mine host, "that Deadman's Ness, as this our little island is called, because, as they say, the tide sets in upon it so strong that bodies which have fallen or been thrown overboard in the river are generally washed ashore here, is and has

long been resorted to as a place of refuge, a haven of safety, by all who wish to escape from what is called justice. This place is a sort of asylum for people in difficulties."

"Surely," said I, "you do not shelter criminals—men who have committed —"

"No—no—we don't protect murderers, robbers, or burners of houses, or insulters of women. All I mean to say is, that if any man, gentle or simple, happens to have exceeded his means, and got into difficulties with his creditors, or taken a hare or a pheasant from a preserve, and given the keepers the slip, or a tap on the head, or has subjected himself to the kind inquiries of the exciseman or constable, he has only to get into Deadman's Ness, and trust to us. He is as safe as if he were on the other side of the herring-pond. Just ask a constable or an exciseman to show you the way here—he will lend you a telescope, and show you where to look at us, but he will not venture to act as your guide into the island.

"Well; when I was a youngster, some seventeen years old or so, at the time my

father, rest his soul! — he was killed in a shindy with the coast-guard—was alive, and kept this house, and tilled the little farm adjoining; I remember I was roused out of a comfortable sleep after a hard day's work on the water, by a handful of mould, thrown with great force against my bedroom-window.

"I thought it was Sally, my wife that is now, at some of her nonsense; for she was but a young thing then, so I would not answer, and shammed sleep. The signal was repeated, and so much more vigorously, that, to prevent my lattice being smashed in, I jumped out of bed and opened the window. It was a very dark night, for there was no moon, but, if there was not a moon, there was a fog—and a Deadman's Ness fog *is* a fog, and not a mere little mass of vapour.

"'Who's there?' said I.

"'Why the —— don't you come down and let me in, you lubber?' said a deep-toned voice, with more oaths between every other word than I choose to repeat.

"'Who *are* you?' I again asked.

"'Nick, you ignoramus,' said the voice.

"'What do you want waking people up in this way?'

"'I want Jabez Buntline, and that directly.'

"'My father's asleep long ago, and the house is shut up,' said I; 'but if you only want a snooze, you can turn into the stable, and enjoy the dry litter.'

"'Thank you for nothing, young one. Now just listen to me. If you do not go and rouse your father, and tell him that Nick—Nick Croxtead, mind—is befogged at his door, and besieged at home by the constables, and if he does not quickly make his respectable appearance, I'll fire the house, and burn the family to cinders.'

"'Where's your light?' said I, very impudently.

"'Just be more than five minutes, that's all,' said Nick, and before I could close the casement, I heard a chip—chip—chipping kind of noise that I knew proceeded from flint and steel, and saw a few sparks through the thick fog. I had heard of Nick by name,

although I had never seen him until then, and from what I had heard of him I felt assured that any threat he uttered would not be uttered in vain.

" I ran to my father's door, and told him who was below. He was up instantly, like a sailor disturbed with the cry of 'a man overboard,' and I was ordered to grope my way in the dark and admit Nick as quickly as I could. I did so, and I got such a box on the ear for keeping him in the open air so long, that it tingles now at the bare remembrance of it. I hated Nick then, though I learned to love him afterwards.

" Well, my father came down shortly with a light and the keys of the bar; and when I had made up a good fire and put the kettle over it, I was ordered off to bed, but not before I had taken an observation of Mr. Nicholas Croxtead's personal appearance.

" He was as ugly as sin is said to be. He had lost an eye by a cutlass wound in a scrimmage, and the same blow had left a deep scar right across the nose that had been as prominent as an eagle's beak, but the blow,

by crushing the bone, had left it a pug. His teeth had suffered in some other affray, and brought his chin much nearer to the nose than nature intended it to be. His whiskers were enormously large and bushy, and his hair was as white as our gray mare's tail. Such a pair of shoulders as he had you never saw, nor such calves to a pair of legs either, and his hands were bigger than a moderate-sized shoulder of mutton. He certainly was what is called an ugly customer, and not a man to sing 'meet me by moonlight alone' to, if you thought he would accept the invitation.

"After I had seen the man, I could not rest without listening to the tale which I knew he wished to communicate to my father; so, after I had gone up to my room and closed my door with a bang, I opened it again very gently and slipped down stairs, taking care that not a stair should creak under me lest I should be detected and murdered on the spot.

"Soon after I had placed my ear at a convenient crack in the door, I heard my father

ask him what brought him over to the Ness at such an hour, and in such weather.

"A deep gruff voice replied; but, in order that you may understand the reply, I must give you a short history of the individual who made it.

"Nicholas Croxtead came from no one knew where, and took a lone farm-house just opposite the Ness on the main-land. The farm itself he took to, but never farmed it, except to grow oats, beans, and lucerne, as a crop for his horses. What his trade was, or how he lived, nobody knew exactly; but, if you wanted a horse or a cow, a piece of silk, a bale of tobacco, a tub of choice spirits, or some Valenciennes lace, a watch, or a ship's cable, a jewelled crown, or a strong anchor, you had only to hint your wants to him, and you were supplied with the article fifty per cent. better and cheaper than you could get it elsewhere.

"Nick Croxtead was looked very shily upon by the neighbouring gentry when he first settled down amongst them; but by some means or other he got very thick with

them after awhile, and 'who but Nick!' was the cry when they wanted a pony or a pointer, a little good tea, or some strong waters. The ladies too smiled upon him, for he was good-looking before he fell into scrapes, and many a ball-room has looked the grander for the lace and jewels supplied to the fair wearers by Master Nick.

"As to coursing, hunting, and shooting, Nick had the best in the county. He was better horsed, better dogged, and better gunned than any of the real gentry; though he sold more horses, dogs, and guns than anybody—even than those who were in that way of trade. He never objected to part with anything he had, and that too at a very reasonable rate. His only stipulation was, 'Pay ready money, and ask no questions,' which was generally cheerfully complied with.

"Nick got on very well, and married a lady—a real lady—the sister of Squire Whortlebury, of Longfield Hall. She had been a great flirt, and jilted half the county, but she took Nick for better or worse, when she saw

a certain little box opened, in which he kept his watches and jewellery. He treated her kindly, I've been told, but never let her into any of his secrets. In this he acted wisely, as the sequel proved.

"Well, Nick lost himself in the estimation of his grand friends in this way at first. His respectable brother-in-law, Squire Whortleberry, had the horse he rode, purchased of Nick for thirty guineas, claimed in the field as belonging to a gentleman in the neighbouring county. He called upon Nick to explain the mistake, but he had ridden off the field, and was not to be found. Another gentleman saw the splendid brace of setters that Nick had let him have as a favour for ten guineas advertised for in the county paper as having been illegally abstracted from their kennel; and a third squire was challenged with shooting with a stolen gun, just as he had won the stakes at a pigeon-match.

"Nick, when taxed with these unpleasantries, merely shook his head, and reminded the gentlemen of the terms on which they had become purchasers, 'ready money, and

no questions asked.' Even his wife could not get any information out of him over his cups, for he was addicted to joviality.

"He began to be what is called 'looked shy upon,' and at last cut by the county men, but he did not seem to care about it, though his wife did: for, though the house was filled with company, it was of a sort she did not like: so, one very fine morning, she eloped with a gentleman whose name was not Nicholas Croxtead. Nicholas was severely hurt by her conduct, and was missing for a day or two. The eloper was missing for a longer period, for he disappeared one evening, and was never heard of afterwards. Mrs. Nick found herself on board an outward-bound West Indiaman, with a gag in her mouth, and an assurance from a voice which whispered gruffly in her ear, that 'if she was ever seen in England again, something unpleasant would be sure to happen to her.' She never was seen in England again.

"Nick varied his mode of living after his wife set sail. He kicked all his female servants out of doors, and admitted none but

males into his house. His housekeeper was an old sailor, with one arm and a wooden leg; his cook was a black man, and his groom of the chambers and washer*woman*, I was about to call him, was a sort of Lascar. All of those odd-looking domestics could talk a variety of lingoes, and so could their master.

"The company he entertained at his house was of a different sort too. You never saw a countryman at his table, except it might be a little farmer, or a tradesman from the neighbouring town. His guests were all Londoners or foreigners, and there were said to be strange doings in his house: gambling and drinking all night, quarrels and fighting, and sometimes wounds given and received, but not from a plain English fist. The knife was used, and the report of a pistol, followed by a deep groan, was sometimes heard. His house got a bad name in the country, and no one cared to pass near it after sunset, or before cock-crow in the morning.

"Shortly after these sad doings began, Nick's money became scarcer, and he who never owed any one a penny was over head

and ears in debt. The consequence was that he was dunned and tormented for money due from all quarters, and at last served with writs and law proceedings. He was very civil to the officers at first, and entertained them handsomely at his table — indeed, so handsomely, that they never left his house sober, and were surprised on the following morning to find themselves at home, with nothing to show their employers as the result of their visit to the defendant but the writs they had carried with them, and which were invariably restored to them lest they should complain of having been robbed.

"It was not likely that such sharp practitioners as bailiffs' followers and sheriffs' officers would put up with such sort of treatment long; so, one day, the sharpest officer of the lot made up his mind to seize Nick's person and convey him to gaol if he did not pay the demand which he had against him. His brother-officers anxiously waited the result of the application. Well, Big Tom, as he was called, went in his shay-cart with his follower, a bigger and stronger man

than himself, and asked to see Nick. He was shown into the room, without any hesitation, in which Nick was sitting alone at his dinner. Big Tom took care to have his follower admitted at the same time, to which the black cook, who had let them in, made no objection. Nick was as polite as ever, and asked the officer and his man to sit down and eat and drink with him. Both of them refused, and Tom, showing his bit of parchment, tapped him on the shoulder, and told him he was his prisoner, unless he could pay £350, the amount of his claim against him.

"Nick made no resistance, but read the document carefully; and, when he had done so, said, in the civilest manner possible, that he was not sure that he had so much money by him, but would examine his writing-desk and ascertain. He called for his desk, and when it was brought to him, he begged of Tom and his follower to be seated, while he counted a bundle of notes which he had taken from his desk. They did so, one on each side of him, for fear he should give them the slip. They had not been seated many minutes be-

fore their legs were seized by Nick's men, who were concealed beneath the table-cloth. They were pulled under the table, their arms and legs tied securely, and then dragged out and seated in their chairs again. Nick looked first at the master and then at the man, and, bursting into a loud laugh, in which he was joined by his servants and friends, told them that among all his faults he had never been guilty of a want of hospitality, and that he never allowed a visiter to quit his house without having eaten and drank in it. The officer swore he would not taste a mouthful of anything, and the man swore ditto to his master.

"Nick said nothing, but cut the writ in two, precisely in the middle, rubbed a little butter over the parchment, and with the aid of his allies forced Tom and his man to swallow each one half of the warrant. They resisted, but it was in vain against numbers as strong as themselves. When the writ was fairly served, a funnel was placed in each of their mouths, and a bottle of strong rum poured down their throats. They were then

tied back to back, and placed in the shay-cart —the reins were cut, and the blinkers taken from the eyes of the horse, which set off with them at a fearful gallop, and did not stop until it fell from sheer exhaustion. Tom and his man were found lying in the road sadly bruised, and in a state of incipient apoplexy, from the strength of the rum and the excess of their fright. Nothing would ever induce either of them to attempt the capture of Nick Croxtead again.

" I could narrate many stories of the way in which Nick evaded the laws of debtor and creditor, but it would only weary you—suffice it to say, he was never taken to prison, though he had two or three narrow escapes. As to other matters, he was always in trouble about poaching, horse-dealing, or smuggling, and many a hard flight, ay, and fight, too, had he to get out of his difficulties; but he always succeeded in escaping, and was at last so much feared, that no man, unless well-supported, would venture to attempt to put the law in force against him.

" But I must now tell you what I heard

while I listened at the door of the room in which Nick, for the first time to my knowledge, was sitting with my father.

" ' What brings you to the Ness, and on such a night? It must be something more than usual that would induce you to quit the farm, and cross the sands in such a tide and fog as this, at the risk of your life?' said my father.

" ' Jabez Buntline, fill me a large tumbler with sheer spirit, for I am nearly chilled with the fog, and have had to swim for my life. My horse, poor thing, is, I fear, drowned, and food for fishes, and how I escaped I cannot tell.'

" I heard the spirits poured into the glass, and I heard a peculiar sound which convinced me that Nick had drained it at a draught.

" ' Now,' said he, ' listen. I had promised a friend of mine to send him a supply of game. I knew that my worthy brother-in-law's coverts were well furnished, and, as he has not been very liberal to me of late, I resolved to take what he seemed so unwilling to give. We went, and, to make a long story

short, we were taken; for one of my scoundrels—a wretch, whose life I saved, and who has lived on my bounty for years, betrayed me for a heavy bribe. Curse him! never let him cross my path again.'

"I could hear him grind his teeth as he said this.

"'Well; resistance was useless, but I have resolved never to be shut up in a prison, so I resorted to stratagem. When we were carried up to the house of the nearest magistrate—for they were afraid to convey us across the country to the gaol in the night, lest my myrmidons, as they call the honest fellows who see me righted, should rescue me—I was separated from the rest of my gang, and locked up with two stout men in the butler's pantry, the doors and windows of which were barred and strongly fastened to secure the plate and other family valuables. I was quiet for a time, and then was seized with a sudden illness which terminated in a violent fit. My struggles were so frightful, and I grew so black in the face, that one of my keepers opened the door, and bawled

loudly for help. The other was so frightened, that, bound as I was, I could have knocked both of them down and escaped, but I had a safer plan than that. The fellow's cries brought the magistrate and all his party whom he was entertaining at his table in gratitude for my capture. They found me foaming at the mouth, and my eyes seemed to be starting from their sockets. My struggles were so violent that it took four strong men to hold me down. I had learned to counterfeit fits in my early days. They were so frightened that they sent for the doctor. He came, felt my pulse, and examined my tongue. He unbound my hands, and ordered me to be carried to bed immediately. This was no joke to my bearers, for I managed to bite, scratch, or kick them all. Glad enough they were when the doctor, my friend Tobias Snolter, told them to cover me up with the bed-clothes and hold me tightly down.

" ' Suddenly the nature of my fit changed, and I fell into a quiescent state. Toby Snolter put up his lancet, which he was about to plunge into my arm, and told the people

that I must be left alone with him and quite quiet, or he would not be responsible for my life. He ordered a book, and some brandy-and-water for himself, and said he would sit up to watch me. We were left alone, after a little demurring on the part of the magistrate, and had two or three jolly glasses together—for poor Snolter owes all he has in the world to me—and a score of jolly laughs at our entertainer's expense. As soon as all was quiet, I tied Toby Snolter tightly to the bedpost, gagged him comfortably to himself, and leapt out of the window, which had been thrown open to give fresh air to the paralytic patient. I sought my own stables, mounted my horse, and by a wonderful escape, here I am.'

" ' And in safety,' said my father. ' The signal shall be given in the morning, and let any one catch you who can.'

" I had heard all I wished to hear, and crept into bed. In the morning I was up before dawn, and was ordered by my father, who had sat up with his guest until he could turn in in safety, to give a hint to the Ness

men that a refugee had arrived in the island, and to keep a sharp look-out.

"Our plan is a very simple one, but not the less effective on that account. The island is as flat as a plate, the raised rim of which will represent our sea-wall. Shepherds and farming men are spread over its surface in their daily occupations. If a stranger is seen approaching over the sands, or by boat, a crook, a hoe, a rake, or any other implement of husbandry is held up high in the air; the signal is passed from one to the other, and in less than five minutes every body is on the alert; the pursued person is easily stowed away in some barn or outbuilding, until the search is over, or, if he is found out, easily rescued by some little band, who seldom leave the captors until they have given them a lesson which teaches them the sore consequences of venturing on the Ness.

"I had not long returned to my home, ere news was brought that a strong body of cavalry was riding over the sands. This was a new foe to us, and we were perplexed about

it, though determined to fight it, if needful, for the rights of our asylum, and not give up a man who had thrown himself upon our protection. When Nick Croxtead was informed of the approach of the soldiers, he was resolved not to get us into a scrape; but said that if any one would put him off in a boat as far as the Spit, he should be safe, as he had a vessel lying there that would take him on board, and set sail at once for the coast of Holland. I volunteered to do so, and in five minutes we were afloat, and half-way to the Spit before the soldiers reached this house, with Toby Snolter at their head, vowing vengeance against Nick for his scurvy treatment of him.

"Nick rewarded me with a handsome gold ring when I had put him aboard a little schooner, and I lost sight of him, and so did everybody about us, for some years. His creditors seized his goods, and the farmhouse was left to run to ruin as it chose. Suddenly Nick returned, as brown as if he had been living beneath a vertical sun. He was wealthy too; paid everybody everything that was due to them, repaired the farmhouse, and lived

very quietly. How he got rid of some of the law matters, I cannot say; but we know that money will do wonders.

"By degrees Nick got to his old tricks again—"

"And yet," said I, "you learned to love the man; for so you told me."

"Stranger," said mine host, "I told you truly, for he saved my father from ruin, was the friend of the otherwise friendless, and suffered no man to be oppressed because he was poor; moreover, he gave me that excellent gun."

"Go on," said I, "the plea is a good one."

"Well, as I have said, Nick got to his old tricks again, smuggling and all, and worse than all, gaming and drinking with the old set, furbished up with some new ones, not a whit better than the old. The same consequences followed. He got into all sorts of scrapes and difficulties, and finally over head and ears in debt again. Instead of resisting his creditors, and insulting them, he expressed deep contrition for his folly, dismissed his gambling friends, and offered to

sell everything to pay his debts as far as his assets would allow him. He would have done so, I have no doubt, had he not been taken seriously ill and died—under the care of his grieving friend, Toby Snolter, who said that his patient had died in the course of nature, though everybody else said it was in the course of medicine.

"I, and many other of his friends, saw poor Old Nick in his coffin; and the old women and children, though he had been a good friend to them, were glad when they heard we had seen him safely screwed down. He had indeed caused them no little terror by getting their husbands, fathers, and sons, into scrapes in his rescues—there's no denying it. They were afraid of him, and glad he was gone. We saw him buried; and I, for one, shed real tears over his grave, and shortly afterwards over my father's too, who, I verily believe, got killed merely to keep Old Nick company, he was so grateful to him for all he had done for him.

"I succeeded to 'The Fish,' and to my father's business, and had not the less custom

because I could tell some true tales of the dear departed Nick Croxtead, and show the little dear kill-devil there that he gave me. Many a stranger has, like yourself, come to visit me merely to hear me talk of Old Nick, and see me shoot fowl with his namesake. It's been a little fortune to me has that gun.

"Well, I went on prosperously for two years, and enjoyed myself, especially in fowling. One evening I came home earlier than usual, without waiting for flight-time, for I was tired, and had had good sport during the day. I gave the birds to my wife, and took Old Nick there—the piece, I mean—into the little back-house to clean and oil her. While I was busy with the lock, I heard a tap at the window. I called out to know who it was.

"'Nick, you ignoramus,' replied the same voice, in the same words as I had heard some years before.

"'What do you want?'

"'I want Jabez Buntline.'

"'I—I—I—am he,' said I, trembling. 'What do you want with him?'

"'I want to borrow the gun I gave him; it

is just flight, and the fowl are as thick as hail.'

"I heard the voice of Nick Croxtead—for there was no mistaking it — but I believed it to be the devil's; for I knew that Dick was dead, screwed down, and buried, leaving many mourners besides his unpaid creditors behind him: so I swung the butt-end of the gun round at the window, smashed the lattice-work out, and knocked down somebody. I heard a deep curse or two, and before I could look out to see who it was that *doubled* Old Nick so well, a burly body forced itself through the window-frame, and the gray hair, bushy whiskers, slit nose, and missing teeth, convinced me that Nick's ghost stood before me. I fell flat upon my face.

"'Lend me the gun, you fool, and don't lay floundering there; the fowl will be on wing in a moment.'

"'Take it, and rid me of your presence,' said I, believing it was Nick's ghost—but it was Nick himself. He returned in less than an hour with his gun, and a score of widgeon and ducks, and Toby Snolter. We had a

private room, and there I was let into the secret of Nick's sham death and burial. Toby, it seems, was a dab at making casts of countenances, and had taken Old Nick's to the life—or rather to the death. We had a very pleasant night — very. But fill up, and have one more glass, and then to bed."

"But mine host, what became of Old Nick eventually?" I asked.

"Pay ready money and *ask no questions*," was all the further information I could obtain about Nick Croxtead, the law-evader.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE REFUGEE.

Where shall I bury my shame?
Where, in what desolate place,
Hide the last wreck of a name,
Broken and stained by disgrace?

NATIONAL AIR.

"You must see some queer sights, and hear some strange stories, sometimes, in this out-of-the-way spot," said I to Jabez Buntline, landlord of the Fish, in Deadman's Ness, throwing a tone interrogative rather than assertive into my voice.

"Which observation, or insinuation, seems to imply that you are not ready to turn in just yet, and wish to hear another story," said my host.

"If you are not overtired," I replied, "for the wind and rain keep up such a clatter

about the weather-boarding of your very-much-exposed hotel, that I fear I shall not be able to get much sleep if I am not thoroughly fatigued before I retire for the night."

"That's complimentary, however! So I am to talk you to sleep—waste one of my best tales, to render you impervious to wind and rain, like a haystack with a tarpaulin over it," said Jabez.

I saw my error at once, and endeavoured to remedy it by assuring him that I relied more upon the effects of the creature comforts before us to insure the attainment of the consummation I so devoutly wished for, than upon his talents for story-telling, which had already proved themselves so efficient in keeping me wide awake.

He smiled ambiguously, whispered something about "palaver," and, filling up his pipe and glass, thus began:

"Well, once upon a time, as the story-books say, I was rather uneasy in my mind about the non-arrival of a vessel in which (I do not mind telling you, for of course it goes no further,)

I had ventured a considerable sum, for such as me, in a cargo of dry goods and tobacco. Now, when a man is in a state of he-dont-'know-howishness, somehow or other he cannot sit down quietly and enjoy himself—at least I cannot—as he does at other times. I was all in a fidget, very irritable, and disposed to quarrel with my wife, and even with my customers. My pipe would not burn pleasantly, and my grog had a peculiar smatch with it which made it taste more like physic or poison than pure Nantz. I could not sit still in my chair; and, instead of listening to the stories and songs of my company in the tap-room, I was straining my ears to catch the sound of a boat's bottom grating on the hard, or the shouts of her crew. At last I could sit still no longer, so I left the house, and having mounted the sea-wall which protects our little island from the attacks of the salt water, I wandered slowly down to the point whence you get a view, round the spit, of the open sea, and a good way up the river.

"I applied my telescope to my eye, and

swept the surface of the water, but neither lugger nor cutter was in sight. I strolled up and down for some time, using the glass at intervals, and, just as it was growing dusk, I fancied I could see, on a bright red spot, caused by the last ray of the setting sun, a small boat with her sail set, steering for the Ness. It had been rather a rough day, and had blown half a gale of wind until the tide ebbed, when the wind sunk and the rain ceased. Now, as the tide was setting-in, and the water fast rising, the wind was rising with it, and the dense black clouds, just above where the sun was sinking, portended a storm, if not a tempest.

"When the sun went down, it grew suddenly too dark for me to see any object distinctly, much less the small boat, which must have been some three miles distant. The wind began to howl, and the rain to dash in my face in large warm drops, a slight flash of lightning gleamed in the west, and the distant roar of thunder made itself heard. Presently the wind howled louder and louder, the rain fell in heavier plashes, the lightning

gleamed more vividly, and the thunder proclaimed by its increased distinctness that the storm was approaching nearer. I began to feel nervous and agitated about the fate of that little boat, for somehow or other I felt—I could not help feeling—that she was steering for the Ness, to announce to me good or evil tidings of the fate of my venture.

"I stood for some time straining my eyes in hopes of catching sight of her during the momentary gleam of the lightning; but all in vain; she was a mere speck upon the ruffled surface of the waters that lay before me, and, had it been broad daylight, I could only have got a glimpse of her now and then as she pitched over the top of the waves, which were now bristling under the powerful influence of a sou'-wester, and presenting the appearance of what we call 'white horses.'

"When I was nearly wet to the skin, I began to think that it would be as well, if I remained on watch, to put on my Flushing coat, large boots, and oilskin weather-cap; so I hastened in-doors, and when I had provided

against the storm and the effects of the cold by waterproof clothing and a dram of spirits, I lighted my ship-lantern, unbeknown to any body, even to Mrs. Buntline, climbed the wall again, and took my station on the hard —the little stone jetty or pier, or whatever *you* like to call it, where you were put ashore. I held my light as high as I could above my head, so that those in the boat might see where to make for by its rays, and that I might see beneath them any object that approached. How it did rain, blow, and thunder! It would have frightened any landsman to see the lightning flash and play about him, and have driven him in for shelter even if he had known that his whole fortune, ay, life itself, depended upon the little boat about which I was so anxious. I cared nothing, however, for the pelting of the rain or the blowing of the wind. I was too much used to rough weather to mind it when I had, as I thought, much at stake; besides, I felt that common humanity demanded of me to do my best to succour those, whoever they were, who were in so perilous a situation as the crew of

that little cockle-shell of a boat. I knew that if they missed the Spit, and failed to round it into our creek, they must be driven ashore and probably be dashed to pieces, or, at the best, compelled to spend the night upon such a portion of the lowland as would not be covered by a high spring-tide.

" I watched and watched, until I was tired of watching, and my feet and hands were numbed with the cold. I had almost lost all power of seeing or hearing, for the brightness of the continued flashes, the howling of the wind, the dash of waters, and the booming of the thunder, had well nigh deprived me of the senses of seeing and hearing. Still I kept my station manfully, although I began to feel a little timorsome, and to fancy all manner of strange sights and sounds. Scenes recurred to my mind that I had witnessed in years gone by. The faces of tempest-lost messmates appeared below me, struggling in the waves and shouting for help. The wind seemed to be peopled with the cries of well-remembered voices, half smothered in the roar of waters, and the din of the thunder-

clap sounded like the booming of cannon—the signals of distress and danger. I began to think of those invisible beings, those unearthly creatures that we sailors know hover about us in storm and tempest when death is about to do his cruel work. I did, as we all do when we are driven to it by fear, even the very worst of us—I began to pray—and let me tell you that, at such a time, a man does not stand to pick a form of prayer, but he prays from his heart.

"A few inward prayers for help and strength seemed to calm me; and I then knew that the cries I had heard, and the faces, as I fancied them, that I had seen, were no more than the screams and white forms of the sea-mews, as they dashed over the waves, seeking shelter inland from the storm. I laughed aloud to think what a coward and fool I had made of myself; but, in the midst of my laughter, I felt a hand laid upon my shoulder, and, I do not mind owning it, I was frightened.

"A voice, however, which I knew belonged to Toby Snolter, the doctor, composed me, as it whispered in my ear that my wife was out

of her senses nearly, wondering what had become of me, and had sent him to seek for me and bid me come home.

"I told him why I remained out so long, and bade him return and tell her the reason of my absence; but, just as he was about to quit me, I heard a shout between the peals of the thunder and the howl of the winds, that convinced me I had not waited in vain. In a few seconds, I could see the boat—a mere skiff, rowed by two men, with a third sitting in the stern; and, in a few seconds more, she was alongside the hard, and made fast by a rope.

"To my question, 'What cheer?' a voice unknown to me replied by another question, 'Is this Deadman's Ness?'

"'Ay, ay,' said Toby, 'you've hit it to an inch.'

"'And you are Nessmen?' said a second voice, also strange to my ears.

"'Both of us,' I answered.

"'Then just lend us a hand to get this long-legged landsman ashore. He is in some scrape or other, and hired us to land him here to play at hide and seek for a bit.'

"'Come, sir; now then—here you are—step ashore—look lively,' exclaimed Toby and I by turns.

"'Lord love you,' said one of the boatmen, 'you might just as well ask a porpoise to come ashore and take a glass of grog with you. He's been as good as dead ever since the gale came on.'

"'Just show a light,' said the other boatman. I did so, and by its glare saw him unwrap a long, thin, pale person from amidst the folds of a large blue cloak, having his hat, which was crushed by the experiment and the rain, tied tightly over his head and under his chin with a red pocket-handkerchief, which made his ghastly face look the ghastlier.

"'Lend a hand, all of you,' said I, as I set my lantern on the hard, and sprung into the boat. I lifted the 'gentleman in difficulties' in my arms, and, passing him on from one to another, we got him ashore, and carried him, as if he was a dead man, by his head and legs, into the Fish, by the back-door, and upstairs at once to the top of the house. There is a room there which you have

not yet seen, where we stow away all sorts of things, besides people in trouble, for it has its conveniences.

"I was glad Toby Snolter happened to be at our house, for I really thought the chap in the crushed hat was dead or dying; but Toby only smiled when I hinted as much: and, giving me a peculiar wink, which I knew to imply, 'get rid of the strangers and bring the brandy-bottle,' I obeyed, and, showing the boatmen into the tap-room, returned to the look-out room, with a basket of provisions and materials for a fire.

"When I arrived, I found Toby had succeeded in stripping off some of my guest's upper clothing, untied his neckcloth, and seated him in a large arm-chair.

"Toby winked, and I put the neck of the brandy-bottle into the stranger's mouth. He took it very kindly, and I jerked about half-a-pint down his throat. It set him coughing and sneezing, and in a few minutes, after another gulp or two, he opened his gooseberry eyes, and staring at Toby and me alternately, said—

"'Am I safe?'

"'*I* have saved you,' said Toby, shaking his hand fervently. 'I am a surgeon, and I expect to meet with a due reward.'

"'Virtue is its own reward,' said the stranger, in a snuffling, schoolboy tone; and before Toby could explain that was not exactly his meaning, he added, 'But where am I?'

"'In Deadman's Ness—where you wished to be,' said I.

"'And who are you?'

"'Jabez Buntline, landlord of the Fish.'

"'And am I safe?—will you protect me?—hide me from—from—'

"'Any body and every body,' said I, 'provided you have not murdered, fired a house or a corn-stack, or injured a female.'

"An additional paleness, for a moment, came over the pale man's features.

"'*I* am—*I* am the injured party. I'll do any thing, pay any thing, only do not let them take me up before the bench.'

"'The old story,' whispered Toby. 'I never knew a guilty person take refuge here in my life.'

"'You will be quite safe here, sir,' said I, 'if you only comply with my usual conditions.'

"'And what are they?'

"'Pay ready money for every thing, and ask no questions.'

"'I'll comply—I'll comply,' said the stranger, pulling an apparently well-filled purse from his trousers'-pockets. 'How much is the brandy?'

"'Never mind that now,' said I; 'you'll want something more before you go to bed, and you can settle all in the morning.'

"'Oh! yes, *we* shall want some supper, of course,' said Toby, seating himself. 'What have you got in the house?'

"'A capital cold goose," said I.

"The stranger turned pale, and stared at me; then, putting on an emeticy look, shuddered and shook his head.

"'Stomach won't stand goose,' said Toby; 'I'm for something hot — so are you, I suppose, landlord? What say you to a rump-steak for three, onions and potatoes?'

"'That will do for *me*,' said the stranger; '*you* can order what you please.'

" 'I do not want to impose upon you, sir,' said I; 'but I do think a bit of grub and a glass of something warm are not too much to bestow upon two men who have been out in such a storm for some time to save you from drowning—but, as you please—the doctor and I can leave—'

" 'Oh! dear!—no, no—pray don't—I shall be most happy to see you, and pay for—what do you charge for supper? How much a head, including beer and bread and cheese? What's the lowest figger, eh?'

" I looked at the brute, and said to myself, 'Is this the fellow for whom I stood two hours in the storm, got drenched with rain, and almost frightened to death with fancied spectres?' I felt inclined to turn him out of doors, and perhaps might have done so, had not the notion come across me that he must have perished in the storm that was still raging, and that I should be guilty of murder.

" As I turned to leave the room, to order the supper, my guest called out that he should like some vegetables.

" 'Cabbage, I presume,' said I.

"'Curse cabbage!' shouted the stranger, looking paler than ever.

"'That or a potato is all you are likely to get to-night. We are not celebrated for a variety of esculents in the Ness,' said Toby, between the puffs which he was bestowing on the fire to make it burn up.

"'Well, curse cabbage! let it be potatoes,' said the stranger; and I must say the heartiness with which he cursed the cabbage rather surprised me.

"While I was below getting the tray in readiness for the steak—for I never allow anybody but myself, not even Mrs. Buntline, to wait upon any one who is in trouble, and up in the look-out room—I contrived to put a few questions to the boatmen who had brought over the chap that was too delicate to eat goose, and vented curses on cabbage. All I could learn from them, however, was, that another chap, much of the same rig and build, had driven my guest in a sort of chaise-cart to a fishing village on the opposite side of the river, and inquired if anybody would take one of them across.

"'We offered our services for a guinea a piece,' said one of the men; 'and he tried to lower our terms to half-a-guinea a piece; and when he saw that would not do, he said, if we'd take off five per cent., and say pounds instead of guineas, he'd go over with us; but we'd a-changed our minds then, and could not go under two guineas each; and while he was hesitating, we heard t'other chap say — You know you *must* go; and so we asked five pounds between us, and of course we got it.'

"'Did you know he was coming here?' said I.

"'Not till we got off, and it was too late to make a better bargain,' said the man. 'Nevertheless, we took it out of him in fun—for when the storm began, you never saw any chap so frightened in your life. He sat down cross-legged, just as if he had been used to the attitude, at the bottom of the boat, and cried, laughed, and was ill, and prayed and cursed all at the same time, till at last he grew so bad, that we rolled him up in his cloak, and tied his hat over his head with his handkerchief, just as you found him.'

" 'And you do not know his name or what he is?' I asked them.

" 'All he let out was, that if he was cotched and carried before the beaks, he should be exposed and ruined for life. We drew the passage-money before we started, in course; but, after such a voyage, we think he ought to stand grog and tobacco.'

" 'He won't,' said I; 'he is not of the right sort.'

" 'Try him, and if he's shy, just hint that we cross again as soon as the wind lulls, and have a mouth a piece, with a tongue inside of it.'

" Well, I carried up the supper things and the boatmen's message. You never saw a chap in such a passion, or heard one go on so about imposition and cheating, and so on. He swore he'd be, you-know-whated, before he'd give them another shilling; so I tried the hint given me, and I had no sooner done so than he turned paler again, and handed over a shilling for each of them, which, by my advice, was enlarged to half-a-crown, much to his very evident annoyance.

"His appetite, however, did not seem to be greatly injured, for he ate almost as much as Toby Snolter and I did; nor was he backward in emptying the tankard. As he ate and drank, his temper began to improve, and he seemed inclined to make himself agreeable, until I was removing the tray, and asked him how many bottles of grog, and of what sorts, I should bring up. He turned sulky at first, but a thought of his being at our mercy seemed to come over him, and in a despairing tone he said—

"'Just as many and of what sort you please.'

"So I brought up three bottles of the best brandy, and a box of the best cigars, for I was determined to punish him for his meanness.

"'Before you begin your grog, sir,' said Toby, when I had set my cargo down, 'just try a little neat to settle the supper—come, just one thimbleful.'

"'Curse me—do you mean to insult me?' said the stranger.

"'Oh, no,' said Toby; 'take a tumblerful,

if you like; only I thought a thimbleful would suit you best.'

" 'Thimble, suit! I'll—but no, I won't—it's no matter. Ah! ah! ah! how very odd!'

" 'A lunatic,' whispered Toby to me.

" I took no notice, however, but made the grog, and lighted my cigar. Toby and the stranger did the same, and after a few glasses we got quite chatty and agreeable, until I put him out by telling him that he would be safe enough here if he could only produce a few parchments, and a bit of tape or two, and pretend to be here on business, and that those were the best measures to take to stop people's mouths. How he did stare, and muttered so many curses, that I was obliged to check him, and tell him I never allowed such language in my house.

" 'You see, sir,' said Toby Snolter, in explanation, 'when gentlemen come here, and confine themselves to one room without having any thing to do, it looks suspicious; but if they make believe to be lawyers, or land-surveyors, or authors, or any thing else, people who come up to sit a bit with them,

and take a glass and so on, (for they don't like to be alone long,) see a few papers or parchments about, tied up with a bit of red tape, and think, or at least say, it is all right.'

"'And that was all you meant, eh? Capital—prime, by jingo!—an excellent pattern, and I will—'

"'Cut your coat according to their cloth,' said I.

"The stranger looked at me steadily for a moment, and then burst out into an unnecessarily loud laugh, indeed so loud, that Toby seemed alarmed, and drew his chair farther off.

"After this we smoked and drank quietly, and then we talked and sung and told stories. I was puzzling myself all the while to make out who and what my guest was. I was certain he was not a gentleman, although he wished us to believe him one, and talked loudly of the high figgers in his banker's book, and the respectability of his connexion, which he intimated was a very extensive one, and particularly among army and navy men.

"'Do you happen to know one Admiral Blowbreeze?' said I.

"'Know him!' replied he; 'I should think I did—from the collar of his coat to the buttons of his drabs.'

"'A fine, large man, I mean,' said I.

"'Stands six foot and an inch, and measures exactly a yard and two nails round the waist.'

"'Any fine women in your parts?' inquired Toby Snolter.

"'Superfine, sir, all superfine—all of the first mark, and I do flatter myself that Clemmy—Dandy Clemmy, as the dear little loves call me, though my name is Clement Dando—is in page 1 of their books.'

"'You are not married then, I presume,' said Toby.

"'I should think not; I'm not going to cut myself to waste; but, if you know of any nice, quiet, little pattern of a wife, with a little embroidery about her—real gold and silver, no tinsel, mind—that would fancy my cut, why Clemmy's the man that won't be ungrateful, that's all.'

"The grog was evidently getting the mastery of the chap's brains, and he rattled away about

Lady This, and Mistress That, winking his gooseberry eyes all the time as if he thought to impose upon us the notion that they bestowed their bright looks upon him. Then he launched out about his property, and the immense sums owing to him if he could only get his debts paid, until I really believe Toby Snolter began to think him somebody.

"I did not. I had been thinking while they had been talking.

"'Goose, cabbage, thimble, parchment, tape, patterns,' said I to myself, 'those are the words that offended him, and now he talks of cutting to waste, and knows the exact measure of Admiral Blowbreeze—hang me, if he is not a tailor!'

"I was confirmed in my suspicions when I heard him say, in reply to Snolter's recommendation of a wife,

"'If you'll warrant her superfine, and show me a pattern of her out of this window, why, curse me, if the piece of goods corresponds with the pattern, I'll take it off the maker's hands without any deduction, let the figger be the highest in the market!'

"I did not communicate my discovery to Toby nor to Clemmy, for I meant to have some fun out of the conceited chap, so I sent the bottles round merrily, and, when he was verging on the brink of impropriety, I told him I knew of a quiet little woman with plenty of money, that would suit him to a T.

"'To an *ell*, you mean,' he hiccupped.

"'And that I would introduce him on the morrow, if he would retire quietly to bed.'

"I shall now proceed to tell you what my plan was, and how it succeeded.

"You have remarked that we islanders of the Ness are by no means diminutive in our statures, and although our women are not generally above the average height of the women who are born elsewhere, we have a few among us who might earn some money by being shown about the country as Swiss giantesses. Among these, remarkable for their height and size, one bears away the bell from her comrades, by some three inches in height, and some foot and a half in girth. She is as strong as many of our men, and, though she lives a life of single blessedness, she never

stands in need of a protector. She occupies and tills a few acres, her own freehold property, and has two boats in which she often puts to sea herself, even in the roughest weather. Neither the men whom she employs about her farm nor the crews of her boats dare to impose upon her, or be rude to her, for she would no more mind seizing a brace of them, one in each hand, and knocking their heads together, than I should hesitate to kick any fellow who had insulted my wife. Indeed, she once punished a great burly captain of a coal brig, who had insulted her, so severely, that he was obliged to take to his bed here for a week, and had to pay Toby Snolter a handsome sum at the end of it for medicines and attendance. She has had several offers of marriage—for she is supposed to have saved some money—but she only snaps her fingers at the proposal when it is first made; but, if it is repeated, she is apt to turn the would-be bridegroom out of her house rather roughly. I'll answer for it no one ever popped the question a third time."

"And what is the Amazon's name?" said I.

"Judith Darlstone," said Jabez, "is her real name, but she is known in the Ness as Broad-dykes—that being the name of her little farm. In fact, we islanders seldom call any one by the names given them in their baptism, but by some nickname derived from some place or circumstance connected with them—for instance, I am known as 'the Shaver,' because I will have a fair profit and no long reckonings.

"Well, to cut a long story short, I made a confidant of Toby Snolter, and begged him to come down, as soon as he had seen his patients inland, and aid in my plan. He got here soon after breakfast, and joined us upstairs in the room that I call 'the look-out,' as it commands not only the approach by sea, but also the only road across the island by which this house can be reached.

"Mr. Clement Dando was not very well after his voyage, the beefsteak supper, and what followed it. He was so low-spirited too, and so fearful of having betrayed the cause of his being in concealment over his cups, that he scarcely ate any breakfast, and re-

fused to leave the house by a snug back-door that I have, for a walk on the wall. He seemed rather vexed that he should not have seen the boatmen before they left, as he hinted at an intention of bestowing on them an additional premium not to betray him. This put me in mind of supplying him with his little account. He looked over the items, and paid the amount of the sum total without any attempt to procure a reduction, but seemed to intimate that he did not think that all the brandy contained in the three bottles charged in his account had been consumed. When I opened a little cupboard, and showed him one and a half still in his favour, he seemed satisfied of my intention not to wrong him, and suggested that a slight dose then would do none of us any harm. Toby confirmed his view of the case, so we had a drain or two each of us, and Mr. Clemmy began to grow better, and became communicative.

"'Sir,' said I, 'you talked of wishing to be introduced to a nice little girl, with a little money, by way of a wife. Now I know of one that I think will suit you. You can go

and call upon her. We don't stand on ceremony here, and the girl I mean is a straightforward person, and will not object to your stating your object at once. If she likes you, she will tell you so, and so she will if she don't.'

" 'I had much rather see the article before I propose to become a buyer,' said Clemmy, winking.

" 'Certainly, sir,' said Toby, 'quite right, and it is possible you may see her pass by here in the course of the day.'

" 'By jingo,' I exclaimed, 'oddly enough, here she comes, taking her usual walk along the sea-wall!'

" Up jumped Clemmy, and, after pulling his waistcoat down, and his shirt collars up, and adjusting his locks, rushed to the window, and intently examined my barmaid, a neat, comely wench, whom I had rigged out for the purpose, and ordered to walk up and down twice before the window.

" 'That will do — just the tippy — small waist, taper ankle, well-developed bust—set off a riding-habit to a nicety, although I dare

say she has not been in the habit of riding,' said Clemmy. 'But what's the figger, eh?'

"'A nice snug freehold, a couple of serviceable and profitable fishing-smacks, besides a considerable stock of the ready,' said Toby Snolter. 'At her at once.'

"Clemmy looked queer, and hesitated.

"'Perhaps the gentleman had rather wait till it grows dusk before he ventures out—not that there is any fear; only I know folks in trouble grow more courageous after dusk,' said I.

"'You've hit it," said Clemmy. 'Do you two promise to show me to her house this evening, and I will stand a dinner and wine.'

"This was agreed upon, and I got up a neat little spread, and decanted some of my best port and sherry. Clemmy ate voraciously, and drank so freely, that I was obliged to check him, lest he should be too far gone and spoil our fun. He talked very fast, too, and principally about his plans after he should have got Broad-dykes—as he called Miss Judith Darlstone—and her estates; but did not say any thing about giving up busi-

ness; for on that subject, and the place of his residence, he was dumb, and gave us no information, though both Toby and I tried to pump him more than once.

"We had a cigar or two only, after some coffee, before it began to grow dusk. Clemmy, then, at my suggestion, began to prepare himself for his visit; but, in putting himself into the trim that he thought would prove most fascinating, to his horror he discovered that a most important button was missing from his shirt-front.

"'Never mind, sir,' said Toby, 'Buntline will get a needle and thread from his wife, and I dare say you can sew a button on as well as a woman.'

"Clemmy turned pale, and looked first at Toby and then at me, and seemed as if he was choking. He could not speak, but gave a sort of gasp, ground his teeth together, and at last seized the brandy, poured out half-a-tumbler, and drank it off.

"'Curse the button!' said he; 'I dare say she won't miss it.'

"Having thus got rid of his wrath and his

troubles, he finished his toilet, brushed up his hair, and put his hat, which had not yet recovered its original shape, jauntily on one side of his head, leaving a long lank lock to trail gracefully down his left cheek.

"'Now I'm ready. Wenus render the lady perpitious! One more glass—to the health of Miss Judith, and may she 'preciate the goods the gods have provided for her!'

"We, of course, drank the toast with due honours. I then led him down stairs, followed by Toby, and conducted him through the private door and my garden to the public road. A narrow plank over a wide gaping ditch led out of the main road on to a sort of sheep-common, across which was the footpath leading to Broad-dykes farm. Toby crossed the plank safely, and I, of course, did the same; but poor Clemmy was so nervous that, when he got to the middle of it, by slipping one foot before the other, as little boys do when sliding, a tremour came over him, and he would have fallen into three feet of black mud and water had he not fallen on the plank, and so crept over on his hands and

knees, which were not improved in appearance by this unwonted mode of 'walking the plank'—nor were his nerves strengthened by this narrow escape from a cold bath. The second plank he refused to cross without my aid, and he gripped my hand so forcibly, that I was not sorry when he was safely landed.

"He did not speak a word as we crossed the field towards the house, and from the way in which he kept looking behind him, I think he was disposed to return, had not the fear of being laughed at, or having to cross the planks unaided, prevented him. When we got to the front-door, which was seldom used, as most persons went round through the farm-yard, our knock was not attended to for some time. This period of suspense the lover employed in rubbing his knees, pulling his collars up, and combing his long locks with his fingers. At length a window near the door was opened, and a voice, deep and sonorous as a man's, inquired, 'Who be *you*, and what's your wool at this late hour, and me a lone woman?'

"Clemmy started back and laid hold of

Toby's arm, who merely said, 'All right—speak to her, Jabez.'

"I stepped to the window, and told Miss Judith that I had walked over with a gentleman who wished to speak to her on particular business.

"'Oh, if it's you, it's all well; but come in the back house; the bolts are so d—d rusty at the front, I'll not be able to move them,' said the same voice, as the window closed with a violent jerk.

"'Come along, Clemmy,' said Toby, 'round this way.'

"'Stop — pray stop — who — eh? whose voice *was* that! There's a man in the house —I won't go in,' said Clemmy.

"'Pooh! nonsense!—be a man! Clemmy, that was the voice of love—listen to it,' said I.

"'If I do, may I be—'

"'Nonsense, be a man! what's in a voice? Think of the freehold and the money in the stocks,' said Toby, as he whirled the poor tailor round the corner of the house and into the back-door, where Miss Judith, with a

candle in one hand, which she shaded from her eyes with the other, was waiting to receive us.

"'Who the devil have you got there? but come in—mind the step, stranger, or you'll chance to find your head where your heels ought to be,' said Judith, in her deepest notes, followed by a laugh that sounded as if it came from a sawpit.

"Clemmy hung back, but Toby put his shoulder behind him and forced him forward.

"'Allow me, Broad-dykes,' said I, shaking her large hand heartily, 'to name to you Mr. Clement Dando—a perfect gentleman and man of property, by his own account. He has some business to talk to you about of so particular a nature—'

"'Nothing 'cisable, I hope?' said Judith, placing her arms akimbo, and looking murderous.

"'Of so particular a nature, that I and the doctor will go into the kitchen, and draw us a pint of your excellent ale while he discloses it.'

"'Don't, pray don't,' whispered Clemmy;

'it's all a mistake—I never can be left alone with *her*.'

"He clung to us, but we shook him off, and pushed him into a chair, where we left him, looking more like a dead than a living impostor. I took care not to close the door behind us, but left it ajar, so that we might hear what passed.

"'Well, sir, and what's your wool with the likes of me?' said Judith after a long pause.

"'You, ma'am—nothing, ma'am—there's some mistake. I came here to see a young lady, ma'am, which I saw this morning, slim, thin, and middle-sized—pretty figure for a habit,' said Clemmy, with nervous rapidity.

"'There's no such hussy here. What's her name?' asked the loud voice.

"'Judith—that is, Miss Judith Darlstone,' said Clemmy.

"'Why, you pale-faced, lanky-haired—but, never mind that now. What might you please to want with Broad-dykes? Come, speak up.'

"'Nothing, ma'am—I never heard of her in my born days—never was introduced to

the connexion—don't know the party,' said Clemmy.

"'Here's a mystery, but I'll have it out of you,' said Judith. 'Here, Shaver!' (meaning me,) 'just step in here to tell this young impudence who I am.'

"That was not a part of my plan, however, for I did not wish to face Broad-dykes after Mr. Clement should have explained the trick I had put upon him at her expense; so I gave Toby a nudge, and we slipped out through the wash-house, round by the garden, and waited under shade of the hedge to see the result.

"We heard voices in loud argument, but the thundering tones of Broad-dykes drowned poor Clemmy's treble. We could not make out all the words the lady uttered, but the terms 'tallow-faced, ill-looking, impudent wretch!' reached our ears very distinctly.

"At last we heard, 'Turn out, villain! I'll teach you to come courting! Gentleman, forsooth! Want my little freehold—there—there—take that, and that, and that! and, by the light through the window, we could see the

lady dragging the poor tailor by the hair of his head, and inflicting a series of heavy blows about his face and body. When he managed to escape, by leaving a tuft of his lanky hair in her hand, she caught up a birch broom that stood near and ran after him; but, not being able to overtake him, for he ran like an antelope, she hurled the broom at him. It lodged between his legs, and caused him to roll over and over in the mud. He was up again as quickly as possible, and out of sight in an instant over the first plank—the voice of Miss Judith urging him on the faster.

"As soon as Broad-dykes had vented her rage, and returned to her house, Toby and I set out home. We found Clemmy arrived at the last plank, but, not daring to cross it, he had seated himself on the bank at its side. It was too dark to see him distinctly, but it was clear he had lost his hat, and had his coat nearly torn off his back.

"'Mr. Clement Dando,' said Toby, 'is this the conduct of an independent gentleman—a man of high figger in his banker's books—to run away from two friends who put him in

the way of marrying an heiress and settling for life?'

"'Curse you both!' said Clemmy, springing to his feet. 'I am settled for life—but I'll be revenged—I'll appeal to the law—I'll institute a suit in—'

"'You'd better make a new one for yourself, Mr. Tailor,' said I.

"'Tailor, sir! Curse you! I am not a common tailor, sir. I—I—am an army and navy uniform maker.'

"'Oh! that's it—Chatham, eh?' said Toby. 'I twig—but come along, don't stand here all night. Give me your hand. I'll take care of you—you'll have to walk the plank another way some day.'

"For some minutes Clemmy refused to move, but, seeing us about to leave him, he put his hand in Toby's, and, saying 'I forgive you all,' suffered himself to be led upon the plank. When they got to the middle of it, Toby gave a high spring, up flew the plank, and a fearful splash proclaimed that Clemmy was in the mud. We fished him out, and led him, half-smothered, to the house here, and

introduced him into the tap-room, where we found the two boatmen that had brought him over, and a third man, who proved to be the beadle of the parish of Chatham. This individual put into his hand a bit of paper, which proved to be a magistrate's order to pay five shillings weekly for the support of a little baby in longs, whose mother the wretch had seduced and abandoned.

"'Then I've escaped personal exposure, and am no longer *a Refugee*. Glasses round,' said Clemmy.

"He went off that night, and has never been seen in Deadman's Ness since."

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE BIT OF PREFERMENT.

Mea paupera regna.
VIRGIL.

Anglicé—The little spot I call my own.

"Well, it is really very kind of my friend," said the Rev. Beatus Devonport, as he laid down a letter which he had been perusing, "only I wish it had been a little more valuable."

"Friend, what friend? Valuable—what ain't enough valuable?" said his housekeeper, looking up from her work and at her master, and the epistle on which he was commenting.

"Pish! Mistress Phidele, you—you—are indeed—"

"Are what? Finish, if you please, sir."

"You are somewhat given to an excessive

propensity to interrogation. I never make a remark to myself—"

"You spoke out loud, sir."

"I never make a remark to *myself*, I say, and I say so advisedly—but you on the instant fancy I am addressing you, and—and—"

"And what, sir?"

"There again! had you waited but an instant—foreborne for a mere second from that inquisitorial habit of putting in your queries—"

"My what? My queer eyes? Mr. Devonport, I have lived long in the world, and never before—but it is of no consequence—I know I am old, and as the song says,

All that's bright must fade,

and of course my eyes ain't going to escape the universal sentence."

"Pish! Mistress Phidele—your eyes are bright enough now. You have just threaded that very large darning needle at the very first shot," said her master, kindly.

"The first what?" inquired Mrs. Deedy, for such was her real name, although her

master chose to call her by the name which Horace bestowed on *his* female domestic.

"Never mind what. I was about to observe—"

"Didn't you observe that your friend was very kind, but not valuable enough?"

"I said, then, if you will be so tiresome, that my friend, Mr. Blackmore—"

"What the little gentleman as comed down a shooting in a Tartar dress, and had gin and milk with a clove in it for breakfast?" inquired Mrs. Deedy.

"Pish! woman, Tar*tan* you mean. He is of Scottish descent."

"And do all the Scottish people wear red and blue criss-crosses, and drink gin and milk with cloves in it to their breakfastes?"

"I never did!" said Beatus Devonport, rising from his chair, closing a large volume of old divinity with a hearty bang, and taking three very rapid turns round his little apartment.

"What, you're 'going the circuit,' as the lawyers say—putting yourself in a miff merely because I asked *one* question? But

I'll say no more—so you can sit down and make yourself easy, instead of going round and round and round again like a turnspit on a feast-day."

Beatus Devonport sat down again. He opened the volume, found the page, and the very paragraph at which he had left off, when the arrival of the letter which had given rise to the preceding colloquy interrupted him in its perusal. He merely made believe to read, however, for he was so indignant with his old servant, that he was ploughing up from the subsoil of his brain some pretext by which he might rid himself of her and her tiresome interrogations. Yet, when he thought of the kindness she had shown to his motherless infants—when he saw, in his mind's eye, their healthy looks and hardened frames, and recollected that she who had borne them to him had fallen a victim to consumption, and believed that their escape from the same fearful disease was attributable to the judicious management of his "tormentor in trifles," he again closed the volume, smiled

benevolently upon her, and re-opened the important epistle.

"Pardon me, Mistress Phidele, I was somewhat hasty. My friend Mr. Blackmore writes me thus—"

"Does he write clean and clear? for he was rather not given to soap and water, and bited his nails to their quicks," said Mrs. Deedy.

"Writes me thus," continued her master, resolved not to notice his familiar's failing:

"Dear Devonport,

"I have a small living at my disposal. You have been many years a curate and a zealous man in the discharge of the duties of your profession. *Pastorn Parva* is not a very valuable bit of preferment, as you will see by a reference to the *Liber Ecclesiasticus*, but it will be better than a curacy, and, from its situation, is not unlikely to suit you, who are fond of a little innocent recreation in fishing and shooting when you know it will not interfere with your duties. If you will accept

of it, I will send you the presentation by return of post.

"Your sincere friend,

"ISAAC BLACKMORE."

"Well, and what does *Liber Clissasticus* say it's worth?" asked Mrs. Deedy, laying aside the stocking which she was darning, crossing her arms, and gazing steadily at her master.

"Under two hundred a year," replied Mr. Devonport.

"And he calls that a living! Why it's a mere starving—the cure's a'most as good," said Mrs. Deedy, showing by her looks and a peculiar twist of her nose that she looked upon Mr. Blackmore as a very contemptible person for having made an offer of such a mere trifle to her worthy and much respected master.

"Never mind, Mistress Phidele; recollect that, when I am inducted to it, it will be my own. I may be removed from my curacy at any moment, and as to where to lay my head, if I am suddenly removed, I cannot form a notion. I am resolved to accept of this 'bit of

preferment,' as my friend calls it, and eke out a livelihood, as I have hitherto done, by taking pupils or writing for my daily bread."

"Pupils won't do any longer," said Mrs. Deedy, shaking her head. "Nancy and Mary have finished school, and are come home grown up young women—"

"But my pen—"

"Cuss the pen! I was going to say. What, bring on nettlerash, nervousness, and indigestion again—what our learned doctor calls *gasterontereet*—not you indeed, if I have a voice in the matter. No more Plummer's pills for supper, and hop tea for breakfast, with an Abernethy sopped in it, if I can prevent it," said Mrs. Deedy.

"Pish, Mistress Phidele! I have a reliance—"

"I know you have; but rely on it you'll kill yourself before your time if you do. A reliance is all very well when you're paid for it, and don't go snax with a printer."

Beatus Devonport groaned internally. His housekeeper did not notice his distress, but proceeded.

"And whereabouts is this bit of preferment?"

"Close to the sea-side, Mistress Phidele; a delightful spot, I have no doubt. Abundance of fish, and plenty of snipes, fowls, and plovers."

"Why, fish is not so bad if it was not for the sauce. Snipes and wild ducks are excellent, for they want no stuffing; and as to plovers, I only know them by their eggs, which are always eaten with moss—at least, so I have heard."

Her master pished, but did not attempt to set Mrs. Deedy right.

"Is there any land to it?" inquired the old lady.

"A glebe of some twenty acres, Mistress Phidele; but I am afraid the house is hardly habitable without some little repairs."

"A little whitewashing or so?—never mind; I can do that. Milk and whiting is capital, and only wants being laid on with the paste-brush to tidy a place up nicely. With twenty acres of land you can keep cows, sheep, and pigs, and that ends all

my objections to taking the bit of preferment."

Mr. Beatus Devonport having secured his faithful servant's assent—for he would have resigned a much more valuable living sooner than part with her to whom he believed was owing the rescue of his children from consumption—wrote to his friend, and accepted "the bit of preferment."

"The bit of preferment" which Mr. Beatus Devonport had accepted had been placed at the disposal of his friend, Mr. Isaac Blackmore, by a government official, whom he had obliged by securing the return to parliament of a warm supporter of the administration. A few days after the letter had been received, which in warm terms thanked his friend for his kind remembrance of him, and expressed his willingness to accept of the living, Beatus was told that, if he would run up to town, and call at a certain office, he would receive his appointment, and the necessary documents and instructions for induction and "reading in."

Beatus Devonport felt a glow about the

region of his heart when he thought that a few days would entitle him to fix rector instead of curate to his name, and joyfully read the epistle which he had just received to Mrs. Deedy.

"I'll pack you off as soon as I have packed up your trunk," said the good lady, "for who knows what may happen with the government things? King's ministers is just like little dogs in a fair, in and out again before you can say boh! There was our William, as was purvided for in the excise, as we all thought: well, he went up to London to get inducted and read in, as you call it, and if the people didn't tell him he lost it by a vote may I be shot! for our member, it seems, who got William's name put down for the first vacancy, went to sleep during a long talking, and when he was woke up to vote, he went and did it the wrong way. So do you go and dress, master, while I pack up a few things, and be sure be ready for the coach when it drives by."

Long before the vehicle came up, Devonport and his trunk were packed up. He had

taken a biscuit and a little cherry brandy as a preventive of cold, and was already rolled up, like a mummy, in shawls and cloaks (as if Mrs. Deedy was a Murphy, and knew that it must rain or snow, although the morning was bright and sunny) when the distant rattle of wheels and the tramping of horses' feet were heard.

"Here it comes. Now, sir, make haste. Heigh! heigh! stop!!" screamed Mrs. Deedy.

"Good-by, Mistress Phidele, good-by; I shall soon be back again—Rector of Pastorn Parva," said her master, as he progressed with difficulty towards the turnpike-road.

"Stop a moment," said Mrs. Deedy, setting down the trunk just within the garden-gate, opposite to which the coachman had pulled up. "Stop a moment, sir;—I know he hasn't, I'm sure he hasn't—it's so like him."

"What is it, Mistress Phidele? Quick, the coach waits."

Mrs. Deedy put her mouth close to her master's ear — indeed, so close, that the coachman winked at the passenger on the

box very impertinently — and whispered, "Have you put any money in your pocket?"

Mr. Beatus Devonport felt each of his pockets in succession, and said, "Dear me, no! I never thought of it."

"Just like you, sir; but pray go and get some, while I see the trunk booted," said Mrs. Deedy.

Her master threw off a couple of cloaks and ran into his study. He took one of two five pound notes out of his pocket-book, rammed it into his waistcoat-pocket, and reached the gate just as the coachman, having put up the trunk, and been put down for his impertinence by Mrs. Deedy, was shouting, "Now, sir, am I to stay here all day?"

Nothing of any importance occurred to the new rector on his journey, except that, when he had taken a penny biscuit, and a three-half-penny glass of ale, he found it impossible for him to pay for them without changing his £5 note. This difficulty was easily overcome by the driver, who advanced the sum for him out of a side pocket, not doubting but that such a benevolent deposit, made without any

security—more than personal—would meet with its due reward when the time for tipping should come. When he arrived at his inn, the Old Bell in Holborn, at which the coach put up, Beatus found, upon inquiry, that office hours were over, so he resolved to order his dinner, see a play, and enjoy himself for that evening. The steak was excellently cooked, the modest modicum of port particularly good, and Beatus enjoyed them greatly. Seven o'clock found him at the box pay-office of Drury Lane Theatre, where he pulled out his purse, payed his seven shillings, and was greatly entertained by a tragedy, admirably acted by Young and his contemporaries, and a farce in which Munden and Dowton played the principal parts. A quiet oyster and a pint of porter, a chat with a stranger in the coffee-room, and a small glass of negus with his pipe, sent Beatus to bed a very happy man.

The morning came, the breakfast was despatched, and Beatus, as soon as Furnival's Inn clock struck ten, hastened to the office to which he had been directed. He found it

with some little difficulty, for no one knew its locality but the ticket-porters, and those who gained their livelihood in it. Fortunately for Beatus, one of those badge-bearing individuals happened to hear him imitating his Mistress Phidele in her "excessive propensity to interrogation," and offered to show him the *locus in quo* for a consideration. Beatus was told to dive into a sort of area; but, being suspicious that he was about to be hoaxed—for he could not believe that a government officer's officer carried on business in an area—refused to pay his guide until he was certain he had not misdirected him. The porter pointed to his ticket, as much as to say, "I dare not, if I would, play you a trick," but it had no effect upon the *guidée*. A pull at a nob, over which was written, or rather engraved, "office bell," caused the door to open, as if by magic. Beatus threw it wide open, and groped his way along a narrow, dark passage, until he came to another door, with a pane of ground glass on its upper half, on which he could just see painted, "office." At this he gave a violent kick, not purposely, but by acci-

dent, for he had stumbled over a step that seemed to be placed where it was for no earthly purpose but to act as a man-trap.

"Come in," shouted a voice.

Beatus tried to obey. He pushed and pulled; but all to no purpose. The door would not yield.

"Lift the latch," shouted the same voice.

Now it is very kind to tell a man how to gain entrance by merely lifting a latch, but still more kind to tell him where the latch is situated which he is to lift. Clerks of public offices, however, are rather given to enjoying those embarrassments under which they know that the visitors of their dens for the first time are wont to labour. It is a sort of relief to the monotonous tedium of their daily routine of labour.

"Lift the latch."

"I can't find it," shouted Mr. Devonport.

A sort of sniggling and giggling, a violent cough, and a still more violent sneeze, and a subsequent audible using of the handkerchief, reached his ears. He began to feel indignant,

and was about to resign Pastorn Parva and the dignity of rectorhood, when the door was opened by a putty-faced gentleman in black, who looked as if he never had laughed, and never could laugh, and expressed himself frightfully shocked that the dinginess of the situation should have been detrimental to so respectable a person as the *gent* whom he saw before him.

Beatus Devenport's ire was appeased in an instant. He was sure that the quiet, respectable individual who addressed him was not a hoaxer, and, as he entered the office, he looked round to discover who it was that had sniggled, giggled, coughed, and used the handkerchief. No one was to be seen but the quiet, respectable individual, who had expressed himself so politely. He was about to inquire who the ill-behaved person was who had jeered at his distresses, when he was interrupted by the question—

"What's your name, and the name of your benefice?"

"Beatus Devonport is my name—Pastorn Parva the name of my rectory," said Beatus.

"Quite right. Here are your papers. I'll trouble you for £41 15*s*." said the clerk.

"Forty—one—pounds—fifteen?" drawled out the new rector, looking with amazement at the clerk, who rather enjoyed his astonishment.

"All right, sir; it's above value in the king's books."

"Above value—why, it's under value—it's only £190 per annum," said Beatus.

"That has nothing to do with it, sir, as you will find upon inquiry," said the clerk, growing respectful, as he saw the evident agitation under which the poor parson was labouring. "There is no occasion to pay for it now, sir; you can leave the papers with me, and call again when it suits your convenience."

"I will leave a deposit," said Beatus, having an indistinct notion that, by failing to pay something, he might forfeit his benefice. "I will leave a deposit."

"Not the least occasion for that, sir—indeed, I cannot accept of it. Many clergymen who come here for their presentations

are not prepared to pay the amount of fees, of the existence of which they were not aware," said the clerk, quite kindly.

Beatus, however, felt that he ought to pay something, if it was but for civility. He dived into his pockets and searched them *seriatim*, but no purse was to be found. "*Abiit, erupit, evasit,*" he shouted, as he rushed out of the office.

"Lift the latch," said the same voice which he had heard on entering the office, followed by the same abominable niggling, giggling, coughing, and using the handkerchief.

Beatus felt inclined to return and demand an explanation, but sorrow for the loss of his purse overcame his indignation, and the sight of the ticket-porter, waiting to be paid for his services, drove all other thoughts but those of not having the wherewithal to pay him out of his mind.

"Found all right, I hope, sir?" said he of the badge.

"I am very much obliged to you, indeed, my man, very much obliged, indeed, and will

reward you for your services another day. The fact is, I have lost my purse."

"Gammon," said the ticket-porter; "or, if not gammon, what did you keep me standing here for?"

"It's a fact, I assure you, my friend."

"Gammon," said the porter; and as Beatus Devonport passed up an alley into Fleet Street, he saw his guide join a brace of ticket-porters more respectable-looking than himself, from whose mouths he heard, "regular screw," "a positive dead nail," "a complete do," "shabby fellow," &c.

Those who do not merit reproaches feel them far more bitterly than they who richly deserve them. This was the case with Mr. Devonport. He would have paid if he could, but, as some one says, "if he could not, how could he?"

"Waiter, oblige me by telling the landlord I wish to speak with him," said Mr. Devonport, as he flung himself, or rather fell, into a box in the coffee-room.

"Certainly, sir—but you don't seem well.

A little soda and brandy, sir? Capital thing about eleven o'clock, after a play and an 'yster supper," said the waiter.

"I am not ill, I assure you. I have only lost—"

"Your appetite? No unusual thing, sir, after an 'yster supper, followed by a pipe and a sherry-negus. Try a little ginger-beer and gin, sir, or a little bitters."

"Pish, man! I have lost my purse and all my money," said Beatus, tartly.

"Lost—purse—money? not in *this* house, I hope, sir."

Beatus nodded.

"Forty-five years and five months have I been head-waiter in this house, and never heard of such an event before. A slur upon the Old Bell! Here, ostler, tell boots to tell the barmaid to tell master that he is wanted in the coffee-room immediately."

"I am not certain, waiter, that I lost my purse in this house. I might have dropped it or lost it elsewhere," said Beatus.

"If you've any doubt about it, give the Bell the benefit of the doubt, sir. It is a well-

established house, and has a character to lose."

Before Mr. Devonport could reply affirmatively, negatively, or ambiguously to this suggestion of the waiter, the landlord entered smirking and smiling. The waiter, immediately he saw the door closed behind his master, said, "No. 18 lost his purse, sir, and all his money—happy to say he says he did not lose it in this house, sir."

"I said no such thing, waiter. I merely said that I was uncertain where or when I lost it."

"Then, of course, sir, he *could not* have lost it in the Bell, sir," said the waiter to his master.

"I have no reason to suspect the honesty of any of my servants, Abraham," said the landlord; "and I have no doubt that the gentleman has either left his purse upstairs in his portmanteau, or dropped it in the streets. May I venture to ask, sir, how much money you had in your purse?"

"Forty-one pounds fifteen," replied Beatus

Devonport, thinking of the amount of fees demanded of him.

"A serious loss indeed," said the landlord. "It is a large sum to —"

"Yes, and it is under value, I assure you, whatever they may say at the office," continued Beatus, harping on the same string.

"Oh, then have you been to the office about it?"

"Yes, certainly; the first thing this morning."

"It will get into the papers," said the landlord, musingly. "Did you tell them you were stopping at the Old Bell?"

"I rather think I did—yes—I think I may say yes. The papers were all ready, but I did not bring them away with me," said Beatus.

"Sharp work," said Abraham. "He means the reporters had their notes, although he had lost his."

"About the value of £41 15*s*., I think you said, sir?" inquired the landlord, *sotto voce*, and added aloud, "the value then you would

say in round numbers is between £40 and £50."

"One hundred and ninety pounds, as near as maybe," said Beatus.

The master stared at his customer and then at his waiter. The waiter made a masonic sign, by putting his finger to his forehead and drawing a crack on his bald scull. His master nodded significantly, and, politely telling Beatus that he would go and make every inquiry, left the coffee-room, followed by the waiter.

When he was left to himself, Mr. Devonport, forgetting all about his lost purse and its contents—some £3 14*s.*—fell into a deep reverie. He calculated as closely as he could the amounts of his assets at home, and pondered on the possibility of raising £35 15*s.* to add to the £5, which he knew he had in his study, to enable him to find the means of securing his appointment, and the other papers necessary for institution. He had a gold repeating-watch in his pocket, the gift of a former pupil. He drew it from his fob, and, as he surveyed its ponderous bulk, felt a conviction in his mind that any one would

lend him £40 or £50 on such an excellent security. He made a resolution to seek a silversmith immediately, and propose to deposit the watch with him until his first quarter's salary from the tithes of Pastorn Parva should enable him to repay the sum which he required as a loan. The happy idea made him quite comfortable. He rose from his box, brushed his hat carefully, and was buttoning his coat ready to sally forth on his search for a respectable silversmith, when the landlord entered the coffee-room, accompanied by a stout, tall man, dressed in a blue coat, red waistcoat, drab-belows, and top-boots, and followed by Abraham the waiter.

"I am sorry to say, sir, I have made every inquiry, and can learn nothing about it," said the landlord.

"Oh! pish!—never mind—I've got it here and here," replied Devonport, touching first his forehead and then his fob with his finger.

"That means," said Abraham, "that he has just recollected that he stowed it away in his watch-pocket for safety. The Old Bell's acquitted."

"All right then, sir?" inquired the man in the blue coat, &c.

"Quite, I trust," replied Beatus, smiling. "I *think* I can easily raise £50 upon it, and redeem it out of the first quarter, if not out of the dilapidations."

The landlord, Abraham, and the man in the blue-coat, looked at one another, and then winked.

"Allow me to name Mr. Lavender to you, sir," said the landlord. "He will be of great service to you, as you must be aware, from his acknowledged reputation."

"Most happy to see you, Mr. Lavender. Are you a silversmith, a jeweller, or a watch-maker?"

"Allow me, before I reply to your question, to ask you if you have any friends in town to whom you can refer me?" inquired Lavender, the celebrated police-officer.

"What need is there of a reference in this transaction?" said Beatus. "You take the watch, I take the money, and repay it, and demand the watch, as soon as I receive the tithes or the dilapidations."

"It's not a mere crevice, but a regular crack—a hole in the cranium," said Abraham.

"Very strange!" said the landlord.

"Stay a bit," said Lavender; "I think I see through his meaning. You are a clergyman, I believe, sir, and have lost a purse containing—"

"Oh! a mere trifle — something like £3, and some silver," said Beatus.

"Why, you said first of all £41 15*s*., and then £190," said Abraham.

"That, I think, sir, was in allusion to some other matters—to moneys which you had to pay," said Lavender.

"Of course it was—the fees for my appointment to the rectory of Pastorn Parva, for which the clerk at the office demands £41 15*s*. under the pretence, or mistake I may call it, that a living of £190 per annum is above value in the king's books."

"And not being prepared to pay so heavy a demand, you meditated giving your watch as security for a loan to that amount," said Lavender.

"Of course—better to do that than run a

risk of losing the living and displeasing Mistress Phidele," said Beatus.

"You were at Drury Lane last night, sir, and lost your purse when you took it out to pay at the door. Can you describe it?"

"Dark green, with gold tassels, one of which is loose."

"Is this it, sir?" said Lavender, drawing out the identical purse into which Beatus had put the change for his £5 note, after paying his fare and the coachman's tip.

"That *is* it. But how did you come by it?" said Beatus.

"I am a police-officer, sir; Slinking Billy was captured last night, and this was discovered, with a variety of stolen articles, upon his person."

"I am really very much obliged to you. How can I reward you?" said Beatus.

"If you will order me a little luncheon, and allow me five minutes' conversation with you, I shall be obliged," replied Lavender.

"Get it directly," said Abraham. "The Old Bell's all right, master—we haven't lost

our characters, and I know Mr. Lavender's taste—half beefsteak, one pot porter."

When Abraham and his master had left the room, Lavender talked quietly about the news of the day, and other matters not having the slightest reference to any thing connected with the purpose for which he had been summoned to the Old Bell. Beatus endeavoured to join in the conversation, but his mind was so full of Pastorn Parva, and the sum required to be raised for fees before he could call it his own, that he failed signally. The luncheon was brought in by Abraham, and as two plates and two half-steaks were prepared, flanked by two tankards of porter, the fee-frightened parson sat down and joined the gentleman—for he had quite forgotten that he was a police-officer—as a matter of course.

In this climate, or with our English constitutions, there is something miraculous in the effects produced by *mealing* with any one, even a perfect stranger. It opens our hearts, rids us of that reserve which is peculiar to us, and makes the man who eats with us appear to be an old acquaintance. Such was the

effect upon Beatus Devonport. Every mouthful of steak, every draught of porter, tended to cause oblivion of all his difficulties about the fees of Pastorn Parva, and to set his tongue running, as Mistress Phidele would have said, nineteen to the dozen.

Much of his discourse was, literally, Latin and Greek to the clever officer; but, by putting in a query here, giving a knowing nod or a shake of the head there, he contrived, during the meal, to learn from his entertainer his whole history, and the name of the friend through whose interest he had obtained "the bit of preferment," which had caused him so much uncomfortableness.

"I am obliged to you, Mr. Devonport, for your kind entertainment, and am happy to have been the means of restoring to you your purse," said Lavender, rising and bowing.

"I really had quite forgotten—but your conversation has been so agreeable—so far above—but excuse me, pray, Mr. Lavender, in what sum am I indebted to you for your services?" said Beatus, with great difficulty, taking out his purse.

"I never receive money, sir, for such trifling matters; but, if you will extend your kindness, and give me a bit of fish and a cutlet at five o'clock, I shall be sufficiently rewarded."

Beatus rang the bell, and ordered a slice of cod, oyster sauce, and cutlets for two at five o'clock.

"Abraham, bring me a London Directory," said Lavender. "Hum! ha! Isaac Blackmore, Esq., 149, Harley Street; that will do. Keep an eye upon the reverend, Abraham," he whispered, as he left the room with a low bow.

"Your boots are got very dirty, sir; allow me to bring a jack and a pair of slippers and have 'em cleaned," said Abraham.

"Thank you, yes. I think they will do, though, waiter," said Beatus. "You shake your head. Well, take them off, and bring me pen, ink, and paper."

Abraham took away the boots, brought in the writing materials, but entirely forgot the slippers, so that Beatus sat down to write a long letter to his good housekeeper in his stocking-

feet, without being at all conscious of the fact until he had sealed his letter, and was on the point of setting forth to raise money upon the loan of his gold repeater.

It was already half-past three o'clock, and Abraham put the evening paper, just brought in, before his prisoner, and went out in a feigned hurry to get his boots. He did not return until it wanted but one quarter of an hour to five, and then intimated that dinner was prepared in a private room, and that Mr. Lavender would be in immediately.

Beatus, who had been spelling the paper from the title to the publisher's name and address, followed him, like an innocent as he was, and quite forgot that he had not yet recovered his boots.

"My dear Davenport—how do you do?" said Isaac Blackmore.

"My kind friend and patron—I am glad to see you. I would ask you to dine with me—but—but—I have—very odd, you'll say—I have invited a police-officer to dine with me," said Beatus, blushing deep scarlet.

"Lavender cannot come—he is otherwise engaged, so I am here to supply his place. Now don't begin to hum and hah, and ask all manner of questions, like 'Mistress Phidele,' but simply tell me why you did not apply to me, when you found the fees demanded of you were greater in amount than you conceived them to be?"

"I never thought of such a thing," said Beatus; "I was sufficiently thankful for—"

"Enough—I thought so—so now to ring for dinner. While it is being prepared, allow me to present you with a cheque for £100, which you will take care to repay me the very day you are enthroned Archbishop of Canterbury," said Mr. Blackmore. "I advance the loan, however, on one condition, that when you have your papers in your pocket, you do not go down to take possession of your living until Mrs. Deedy, or Mistress Phidele, as you call her, is here ready to accompany you. I have written for her to come up by to-morrow's coach."

Beatus Devonport looked at the cheque and its donor alternately, and tried to say some-

thing. He could only shake his friend by the hand and drop a few tears.

"Abraham, dinner instantly," said Isaac Blackmore.

You must imagine the cheque changed, the fees paid, the ticket-porter rewarded, and Mistress Phidele arrived at the Old Bell, and taking an early tea with her master. You must also imagine the lecture given by the prudent housekeeper to the careless book-worm about not having put seven shillings into his pocket to pay for the play, and left the remainder of the change for the five pound note in the care of the landlord. You must also imagine, after the lecture or caution was over, the fond anticipations of enjoyment expressed by both parties on taking possession—or rather in viewing the premises previously to taking possession on the morrow.

Well, day dawned, if a dawning it might be called which November put forth. The sun was invisible, the streets were just visible through the darkness that might be felt, of a pure unadulterated London fog, when Beatus Devonport and Mrs. Deedy took their seats in

the inside of the pair-horse coach that was to deposit them and their portmanteaus at a town within two miles of Pastorn Parva. They had the interior to themselves; for no one, who was not compelled to do so, would travel on a day when it *snew*, blew, rained, froze, and thawed, alternately.

It was very disagreeable, but the happy pair talked and slept out the journey.

"Now, sir—now, marm—step out, here we are," said the coachman. "What luggage have you got?"

Beatus and his aged housekeeper were roused from their slumbers by the sudden opening of the coach-door and the questions of the coach-driver.

"Where is 'here we are?'" asked Mrs. Deedy, "and what does it matter to you what luggage we have got?"

"This is doubtless the post-town at which we are to stop, Mistress Phidele. We have one leather portmanteau, and a small box covered with mottled paper," said Beatus, addressing the lady first, and then the coachman.

"Stay in the house, sir?" inquired a boy-waiter.

"Stay!—no, indeed. House—what house?" asked Mrs. Deedy.

"I wish a conveyance immediately to Pastorn Parva," said the rector thereof.

"Walk into this room, sir, with your missus, and I'll call my master," said the waiter.

"Missus, indeed!" said Mrs. Deedy; "if I was *your* missus, I'd teach you better manners, young man."

"Mistress Phidele—ignorance is to be pitied, not rebuked. The young man, doubtless, mistook you for Mistress Devonport—a compliment to your respectable appearance which you ought not to quarrel with," said her master.

"A compliment to what?" commenced the domestic; but any further asking of questions and putting in answers was prevented by the entrance of the landlord, who expressed his sorrow that "The only conveyance which he kept, a species of shay-cart, was out, and that no other means of reaching Pastorn Parva remained, but by progressing thither on foot.

If, indeed, his honour and madam would sleep at his house, the shay-cart would be ready to carry them over in the morning."

Both master and servant were too anxious to see the rectory and church not to determine on walking the two miles, if no conveyance was to be had.

The landlord, seeing that it was of no use trying to secure two "stay-all-nights," who were determined not to be stayed, ventured to assure them that he had no doubt but that he could *borrow* a conveyance, and have it ready by the time they had had their dinner.

This was settled. The shay-cart, a comfortable two-wheeled vehicle, was brought to the door, and away trotted Dobbin. Mr. Devonport sat beside the driver, and Mrs. Deedy occupied the seat behind.

"Was you ever at Pastorn Parva in your born days?" inquired Ebenezer—groom, boots, and postboy of the Queen's Head.

"Never, young man. I have just been presented to the living of that parish," said Devonport.

"Hum! ah—hem!" coughed Ebenezer.

"What is hum! ah—hem?" asked Mrs. Deedy.

"It's a rummy place, that's all," said Ebenezer. "However, it's a growing duskish, and you won't see all its beauties to-night. You'll hear some of them, however."

"Hear what?" the inquiry came from the housekeeper.

"Frogs—frogs, marm—and such frogs as you don't hear every day. The Pastorn frogs is proverbial, and would make a French cook's fortune."

"Does the parish lie low, and is there much water about the rectory?" asked the rector, in anxious tones.

"Werry low, indeed; and, as to water, just wait till the winter, that is all. Come up, Dobbin, you've got to git home again, and if you're caught in the marshes, you'll be mystified by the Vill o' the Visps."

Beatus groaned, and his faithful housekeeper popped in a beautiful second.

"Do you see them 'ere poplars?" said the driver, pointing to some half grown, half denuded trees, in a flat piece of ground.

"Yes, certainly," said Devonport.

"Which poplars?" inquired Mrs. Deedy.

"Them as seems forty feet below the level of the hoshun, which you may see in the distance if your spectacles is good."

"Well, young man," said the rector, anxiously.

"Them 'ere poplars overhangs the rectory and church of Pastorn, and is used as a landmark for sailors when they are at top of the mast-head."

"Much ague about here, young man?" inquired Mrs. Deedy.

"More than we can find a market for, marm—you'll spend a fortune in Peruvian Bark. Do you smoke, sir?"

Beatus confessed he liked one pipe at night as a composer.

"Then take my advice, if you should come to reside; begin smoking and drinking grog the moment you come, and never leave off—don't give the ague a chance—but now sit tight, we're coming to a bit of ugly."

The bit of ugly was a sort of lane out of the high road, and, from the depth of its ruts

and the depth of its ditches on either side, afforded the new rector a fair view of the nature of the subsoil of his new parish. It was a fine, deep, impenetrable black marl, on which underdraining would evidently be beneficial.

After sundry narrow escapes of broken wheels, cracked springs, overturns left and right, and bumpings up and down, which made all the three occupants of the shay-cart tremble, and their nag, poor Dobbin, to stumble, mixed with expostulations from the rector, and quickly-put questions of his housekeeper —to which Ebenezer turned a deaf ear—they were suddenly "pulled up" at a field-gate.

"All right," said Ebenezer. "I never thought to have been capable of doing it."

"Doing what?" asked Mrs. Deedy, sore, and sorry, and ready to cry.

"Setting you down safe at the rectory," said Ebenezer.

"The rectory! where is it? I cannot see it," said Mr. Devonport, as he assisted Mrs. Deedy from the conveyance.

"Just keep along this path through the

bullrushes and reeds, and, as soon as you have crossed a plank, and got through an osier-bed, you'll come to the moat; you can't mistake it if you don't fall into the ditches on either side of you," said Ebenezer. "I must back out the best way I can, for there is not room to turn. Good night, sir—good night, a werry good night to you, marm."

"Come along, Mistress Phidele," said Beatus.

"Yah—ah! oh dear!" screamed the lady.

"What is the matter?"

"Such a toad—a monster—there he sits—look—look—let us call that young man back, and come over in the morning."

"Nonsense, Mistress Phidele! nonsense!—come on, madam—we shall soon find the rectory, and be welcomed by the tenant!"

Mrs. Deedy followed her master, but very carefully. She held up her clothes rather too high; and, if one of the bullrushes touched her ankle, she gave a vigorous jump and a piercing shriek, for which she got severely rebuked.

After pursuing the narrow causeway for

about two hundred yards, they came to a sort of wide, muddy ditch, overgrown with water-cresses, brook-lime, rushes, and other water-plants. On the edge of this ditch, which Ebenezer dignified with the name of a moat, grew some half dozen poplars, and behind the poplars stood a low building. Its walls were grass-green from mildew, and a swamp, which called itself a road, was redolent of that peculiar perfume which arises from decayed vegetable matter. No gate obstructed their progress; and the only obstacle they met with was a sow, who, with a litter of young piggies, had taken up her bivouac for the night in the deepest part of the mud. She grunted as the rector passed her, and seemed inclined to defend the place, but a few kind words of, "Poor Bess!—good, old wench—there, lie still," seemed to pacify her.

"Is not this dreadful? oh, dear!" said Mrs. Deedy.

"Here we are, quite safe; come on, Mistress Phidele," said her master.

"Oh, oh!—I declare—I'm in—oh! oh! oh!"

"In where?—how?"

"Knee-deep—oh! oh!"

"Give me your hand, Mistress Phidele."

"Oh, sir—pull hard, for Heaven's sake!—there—oh! oh! one leg is out—now then—there's the other—but where are my shoes? oh! oh! oh!"

"Bring the gun, Bill — here's some intruders," shouted a gruff voice.

"Oh, sir — come here — my shoes — my shoes!" cried Mrs. Deedy.

"Her's a 'oman, father—no 'casion to shoot she," said another gruff voice.

"Hoigh! help!" cried Beatus.

"Who art thou?"

"The new rector, come to look at the parsonage," said Beatus.

"Who's t'other?—Missus Rector?—eh?—go and drag her out, Bill."

"Show a light, mother," shouted the young man.

A light was speedily placed at the window, and Beatus and his housekeeper quickly struggled through the mud to the manse-door.

"You are the tenant of the glebe, I believe, sir," said Beatus.

"I am, sir; Giles Darling be my name; and I've lived here, man and boy, near fifty year."

"I am sorry to say, I must turn you out of your house and home; for I have just been appointed to the living, and mean to come into residence," said Beatus.

"Unpossible, sir. You never can live here. No one ever knowed the time when any minister ever lived here—did they, Bill?"

Mrs. Deedy, who was sitting before the fire drying her stockings, ventured to ask, "Why not?"

"Becos, marm — but you'll sleep here to-night—that is, not here, but at ——, the market-town you came from, and come over in the morning, in broad daylight, and you'll soon see why not."

"I reckoned after getting a bed, or rather beds here," said Beatus, "for myself and my servant—a most valuable, faithful woman—and have dismissed my vehicle."

"We can cart you back, sir. Luckily, we have not turned the old horse into the marshes,

for they are flooded—but you will just look round, and take a bit of supper before you go," said Giles.

Beatus whispered a few words to Mistress Phidele, who could not reply for sobbing and crying; but, as soon as she recovered her speech, begged and entreated her master to make haste and look at the place, and get back to ——, before it was quite dark. He was about to obey, when Bill came in with the shoes which he had luckily recovered from the hole, in which they had been buried, by means of a hooked stick. Such a burst of tears followed, when the owner surveyed their sad condition, that the rector followed his tenant with great speed, to escape his servant's bitter lamentations.

After a short survey of the glebe, the church, and rectory, all of which were in a wretched condition, Beatus was about to ask his tenant to order out his cart immediately, when he was surprised to find Mrs. Deedy by his side. She had resolutely put on the wet, muddy shoes, and with the tenant's wife gone the same round as her master.

"Come, sir, let us get off back as soon as possible. Night is coming on—the place is haunted, and ague makes no distinction of persons."

"Bill, bring out the nag, and get the lady and gentleman out of the quag before worse happens!" shouted Giles.

A few minutes sufficed to put-to; and Beatus, with his housekeeper, were shortly on their road to the town of ——.

"Never will I live in such a place as that," said Mrs. Deedy; "you must either part with your 'bit of preferment,' or part with me."

"I'll resign—I'll resign—never was such a place seen," groaned the rector.

When they arrived at the inn, Mrs. Deedy had a cup of tea and retired immediately. Beatus thought of doing the same thing, but, feeling chilly, he ordered a pipe and some warm negus. He sat smoking in the coffee-room. A gentleman came in, and joined him.

In the course of the conversation that naturally ensued, the stranger learned from Beatus who he was, and why he was there.

He told him that he had been played upon by both driver and tenant—that there was a good road to the rectory by another way, and that, with little expense, the house might be made comfortable, and the land around it drained. He added, that the tenant was anxious to make it appear uninhabitable, for he had occupied it for a mere nothing, and was unwilling to resign it.

"In short, sir," said the stranger, "if you will give me authority to act for you—I am a lawyer—I will engage to get the tenant out, and, with the aid of the Bounty office, make you a most comfortable little home."

Plans were submitted to him on the following morning, and Beatus was satisfied that the alterations were practicable. He was about to consent to them, when the thought of losing Mistress Phidele had nearly subverted them.

"Adopt my plan, sir," said the lawyer—"return to your curacy, and pretend that you have resigned Pastorn Parva. At the end of twelve months bring your faithful servant down to see a new 'bit of preferment;' bring

her by the night-mail, and, trust me, she will not know the place again."

Beatus followed the advice given to him. In one short twelvemonth, Mrs. Deedy, or Mistress Phidele, as her master still called her, was delighted with the new "bit of preferment," and said—

"Ah, this is something like—how different from that horrid place we went to see when I lost my shoes. What is the name of it?"

"Pastorn Parva," said her master, smiling; "is it not a pretty little 'Bit of Preferment?'"

CHAPTER XIX.

A VERY SOFT ONE.

Ce qui vient de la flûte, s'en retourne au tambour.
MOLIERE.

A public school introduces us to many strange acquaintances, and boys form school-friendships from very queer motives. Perhaps no one ever got up an *amicitia* with another boy from a queerer motive than I did with one Brutus Grumps. He was an odd-looking, disagreeable boy; all legs and arms, like a sucking calf, and had a strange aversion to the use of his bandana, which gave him a snuffling sort of habit in speaking, and procured him several severe hockey-stickings. He was very good-natured, had plenty of pocket-money, and spent it freely when he could find any one willing to share his cherries, plums, and peaches, which, with other delicacies, we were allowed to purchase of a man who attended the school daily. He

found no lack of boys willing to eat at his expense, but, the moment the taste of his purchases were out of their mouths, they, one and all without exception, turned upon their entertainer, called him a snob, and cut him until the tartman came again. The fact was, that Brutus Grumps was only a day-boy, and all day-boys with us Rotherwickians were looked upon as snobs, and accounted unworthy to be associated with, except when we wanted their services to introduce contraband articles for our private consumption. We made use of them, and then treated them with sovereign contempt. Is not this plan adopted in after-life? Answer my question, ye men of interest in borough and county elections.

Well, what made me take up the cause of Brutus Grumps—B. G. as he would call himself when speaking of himself—was, that I saw him treat a big bully of a boy, whom I hated, for he was a sneak, a bully, and a coward, to two pounds of most excellent cherries of the species called *bigarreau*, and, when they were devoured, (bully of course

taking the lion's share), I saw the poor day-boy unmercifully kicked, cuffed, and maltreated by the lad who had been feeding at his expense.

I was very much disgusted; and, as I had long entertained the hope of finding some safe ground for fixing a quarrel on the bully, I walked up to him, and demanded his reasons for treating the boy who had treated him so cruelly. He merely replied that I might go —to a place I will not mention. In less than five minutes, Master Bully's face was so disfigured by my fists, that his fond parents would have had a difficulty in recognising their son had they called to see him.

Brutus Grumps was delighted at my success, and perhaps I was a little too much elated by having so speedily subdued the best fighter in Rotherwick; for I, to carry out my principle, as I thought, embraced Brutus Grumps, and publicly proclaimed him to be under my protection, threatening, in our classical phraseology, to *lick* any boy who should attempt to treat him cruelly. I was loudly cheered for my speech by all the

juniors; but some of the seniors smiled, winked, and shrugged their shoulders.

My success with the bully had its effects, and my *protégé* was relieved from many unpleasantries. He was anxious to show his gratitude to me; and, as he was the only son of a wealthy professional man, and, as I have said before, had plenty of money at his command, he took me into a deep recess in one of our cloister-windows, and, after blushing and stammering, popped a piece of silver paper into my hand, and begged I would use it, and return the amount whenever it was convenient. I opened it, and found it was a bank-note for ten pounds. As I was *flush* at the time, I returned it with many thanks for his liberality, and took the opportunity of reading him a lecture on being too free with his money—a habit that might increase with his increasing years, and involve him in serious difficulties. He seemed vexed at my rejection of his offer, and smiled at my lecture, shaking his head in a manner that implied "he knew what he was about."

I stood his friend until I left for college,

and certainly saved him much uneasiness—to use a mild term. I lost sight of him for some years, but heard, through the medium of some brother collegians, that he had come into a considerable property by the death of his father, and was living as an idle "man about town." I thought the paternal property was in very unsafe hands, but had no means of telling the owner of it my thoughts thereanent, until, by a strange chance, I met him in Cowes, whither I had gone to see the regatta. He was the owner of a smart yacht, but not one of the yacht squadron or club. He was merely there, like myself, as a spectator. His joy at seeing me I shall never forget. He positively "fell on my neck" opposite the club-house, and, as soon as he had recovered himself a little, insisted on sending all my traps on board "the Favourite of Fulham," and spending a week or two with him. I could not refuse his invitation, it was so cordially given, although I had other engagements which might have formed, and ought to have formed, valid excuses for refusing him.

As soon as the regatta was over, we left Cowes, and sailed for the quiet little bay and town of Swanage, or Swanwich, on the coast of Dorset.

In transitu—that is, ladies, as we sailed along, I elicited part of my friend's history; and, although the whole of it would amuse my readers, I have selected such a portion of it as struck me, at the time, to be most elucidatory of poor Brutus Grumps's peculiar softness—especially in money-matters.

The friend to whom he alludes, under the name of Toofast Harduppe, was the very bully whose face I had so effectually disfigured for his gross imposition upon him at school. He had, it appeared, immediately after my quitting Rotherwick, made such overtures of peace and good-will as poor Brutus could not resist, and had really received no little κυδος — I beg pardon, ladies, praise is its meaning, from the rest of the school, for having forgiven a boy, and him a day-boy, who had been the cause of his receiving the severest punishment which a school-bully can receive — a thrashing from

another hitherto deemed inferior to himself in pugilistics.

Having made these few introductory remarks, I will allow Mr. Brutus Grumps to be the *raconteur* of that part of his history which proved the most amusing to myself.

Mr. Toofast Harduppe was a very intimate friend of mine in after life; indeed, we were so intimate, that whenever he was in any little pecuniary difficulty, which, I am sorry to say, occurred very frequently, he always called upon me to help him out of it. I advanced him several sums of money, for which he gave me good security; indeed, he called it "the best possible security," namely, his note of hand, bearing interest at five per cent., payable on demand. I was not so green as to demand it, because I knew that I could not get above three-and-a-half per cent. for my money elsewhere. Let me alone, I'm not to be done so easily.

My legal friend was rude enough to hint to me that I should never see one penny again, either of principal or interest. I *do* dislike lawyers. They are such matter-of-fact people, and tell you the most disagreeable things with such

unmoved and unblushing faces. I have no doubt they do it for the best, as a matter of conscience or duty; but I, Mr. Brutus Grumps, do think it d—d disagreeable. What could my legal adviser, Pumpkinson, know of my friend's affairs that I did not know who was so very intimate with him? Nothing. He hinted a great many things, indeed, and insinuated that he had heard a great deal from Dashboard, the West End carriage-builder; Spavin, who dealt in horses; Sewemup, the tailor, and many other respectable tradesmen, who consulted him clientically. Pumpkinson, I maintain, had no business to listen to their tittle-tattle, and no business to mention it to me to try to injure my friend Toofast Harduppe in my estimation. I told him as much, and told it him in a properly peremptory manner. He looked amazed, as I meant him to be. He said nothing in his own defence, but shrugged his legal shoulders, and whispered something about having done his duty to a valuable client. I thought I heard a *diminuendo* at the end, which sounded something very like, "and a pig-headed fool."

I took no notice of it—for the remark was evidently not meant for my ear, or he would have made it louder. I merely bowed myself out of his private office, and went to call on my friend Harduppe, who gave me some capital broiled kidneys, with curaçoa and champagne for my lunch. I relished the liquids the more because I knew that they were paid for. I had, in fact, given him a check to cover the amount of his wine-bill the day before, and had his note of hand for the amount in my pocket-book at the very moment I was quaffing his champagne.

We did not sit very long over our wine, for Toofast Harduppe's carriage was at the door —a splendid phaeton, drawn by a beautiful pair of grays—I had lent him £500 to pay for the turn-out, and knew that they were really worth the money, for Dashboard and Spavin had pledged their honour to their excellency before I would allow my friend to discharge their account. Better judges — I mean of carriages and horses—than those two first-rate tradesmen, are not to be found in London.

We took a delightful drive to Chelsea, where my friend had a very pretty little rustic villa, which he had furnished very handsomely, and I thought, when I paid for the things, rather reasonably. He did not live in it himself, for he preferred his chambers, but had lent it to a young French lady who used to join the *corps de ballet* at the Italian Opera House, before she sprained her ankle, or met with some unlucky accident, which compelled her to retire from the boards. It was very kind of Harduppe, as she and her aunt had really not very comfortable lodgings in Whitcomb Street, and everybody knows that pure air is essential to an invalid.

As we drove along Sloane Street, my friend suddenly pulled up, indeed so suddenly, that the grays were thrown upon their haunches like cats upon a hearth-rug, when they are looking up for their milk. I could not think what was the matter, but, on looking, I saw a very genteely-dressed young man, with a pair of spurs on his boots, and a riding-whip in his hand, but without any horse that I could see, come up to the side of the pha-

eton and shake my friend Harduppe very warmly by the hand, which I was rather surprised at his returning with equal warmth, as I heard him say, "Curse the fellow! I was in hopes he would not have seen me," just as he had got within a foot of the carriage-steps.

We chatted about the weather—for I was introduced in form to Mr. Q. Mace, the best billiard-player of the day, next to Brighton Jonathan; and, as the grays were rather fidgety, I wished him away, that we might indulge them in their evident inclination to move on. Mr. Mace, however, was not in the cue for moving; he had his right foot on the step, and kept it there talking about all sorts of nonsense, until he fairly got his left foot into the carriage, and then he whispered something to Harduppe, which made him say, "He was cursed sorry, but couldn't do it, for he hadn't a dump."

I observed Mr. Q. Mace look at me, and then wink at my friend, who, after a moment's thought, and very *deep* thought it seemed to be by the contraction of his handsome eyebrows, turned round and said, "Can you

pencil a check for fifty? I am ashamed to trouble you, but my friend, Mace—"

"No trouble in the world," said I, taking out my check-book—for I always carry it with me—and filling it up on the crown of my hat, which I used as a writing-desk. I thought I heard Mr. Q. Mace whisper, "Very soft, indeed;" but of course he was alluding to the leathern apron of the carriage, which was made of beautiful Spanish.

Well, Mr. Q. Mace took away the check with a low bow, and pocketed it as if he had been used to pocketing. We wished him good morning, and drove on, and, as we did so, Mr. Toofast Harduppe thanked me very earnestly for having enabled him to get rid of the importunities of a person who, he was afraid, though really a first-rate performer with the balls, did not play upon the square. Now, as billiard-tables are always oblong, I was not surprised at his not playing upon the square; and so I told my friend, who laughed immoderately, and told me that it was the best thing I had said for a long time. I

thought so too, and we were very merry until we reached the rustic villa.

The servant got down to ring the bell. It was not answered for some five or six pulls; and I could not help fancying that, as I stood up in the phaeton to look over into the pretty little garden, I saw a military-looking man, with large moustaches, hurry across to a little door which opens into a back lane. I dare say he had only been to inquire after mademoiselle's ankle; but why did he not make his exit by the front door?

When we were admitted, mademoiselle's aunt told me that Julie was a little indisposed, but would be down immediately. We waited for some ten minutes; and the aunt, seeing that my friend was getting nervous, left the room to see after her fair niece. She returned in a few minutes, and, with her handkerchief to her eyes—for she was crying—begged Mr. Harduppe to follow her to Julie's boudoir. He did so, of course, and I was left alone, and, as the doors were left open, I could not help hearing first a loud sobbing, then an hysterical laugh, and finally a violent pit-a-

patting on the carpet, accompanied by a series of little screams and screeches.

I was about to rush up stairs to learn the cause of these fearful sounds, when my friend Harduppe sprang down stairs four steps at a time, and grasping my hand painfully hard, said—

"My dear Brutus—my very dear Grumps—I must impose upon your friendship for one more check. Would you believe it?—that villanous lodging-letter in Whitcomb Street has issued a writ against Julie for £250. She is ignorant of our laws, and, although I have done all I can to pacify her, and explain the law of debtor and creditor to her in French and English, she cannot be persuaded that she shall not be shut up in a Conciergerie for life, unless she can pay the hard-hearted creditor."

"Brute!" said I, indignantly, as I sat down to write out a check for the amount with Julie's crowquill, which was within my reach.

"He is a brute," said Harduppe, taking the check; "but for you, my very dear Grumps, the poor girl would have been im-

molated on the altar of hard-heartedness. Your kindness is too much. I shall never be able to repay you—mark my words—I shall never be able to repay you."

I felt that glow about the region of my heart which the consciousness of having done a good action invariably produces; and I was indeed a happy man, when I heard Mademoiselle Julie exchange her hysterical giggle for a natural laugh, in which I distinctly heard Mr. Toofast Harduppe and the aunt of the young lady join. We had a little scene when the ladies appeared, for Miss Julie threw herself on my neck and kissed me. I felt rather awkward at first, but, when I remembered that it was the custom of her country, I rather liked it.

We had a little maraschino—which I knew to be good, for I had paid Johnson and Justerini a guinea a bottle for it—and then left the little villa on our return for town, where my friend had invited me to dine at Long's. Mr. Markwell gave us a most excellent little dinner for four, and his wines are first-rate. We did not sit long over the wine; but, as

shorts are not permitted at Long's, we retired to Harduppe's chambers to have a rubber, but not before I had lent my friend a check to cover our expenses then incurred, and a small bill that had been standing for some months.

I lost a mere trifle at whist, and passed an agreeable evening. There was no disputing the excellency of the Regent's punch, which we drank with Hudson's cigars at £4 4*s*. per pound; for Frazer told me, when I called to pay him twelve shillings a pint for it, that he always presided over the amalgamation of it himself.

Poor Toofast Harduppe was not so lucky as I had been. He never won a rubber all the evening, and I was obliged to fill up another check for £40 to pay his score. It was a debt of honour, and he did not like to put off the payment of it until his rents became due. I must say, his tenants do not pay very punctually, at least not for the last twelvemonth in which I have had the honour of his acquaintance. I do not believe, for so he

tells me, that during the whole of that period he has received one farthing from his estates. In what county he said they were I really forget.

I am very particular in money-matters, and before going to bed I make up my accounts. I thought I had not made a very bad day of it that day, as, upon looking over my books, I found that I had advanced Mr. Toofast Harduppe £420, which, at five per cent., gave me an addition to my income of £21 per annum; whereas, had I invested it in the three per cents., I should only have got £12 odd for it. How calmly did I sleep that night!

I did not see my friend Toofast Harduppe all the next day, although I called at his chambers several times. His servant told me that he had gone out soon after he was up that morning, with two men, for he could not call them gentlemen, they looked more like horse-dealers, or prize-fighters, than any thing else. Whither they went he could not tell.

While I was out, Pumpkinson called twice.

I was glad I was not at home, for I felt a conviction that he had merely called to say something unpleasant.

I had a quiet mackerel in my own rooms, and a lamb-chop with asparagus to follow. The fish was not fresh, and the lamb had seen but little of the green pastures. It was not fat, but flabby. The asparagus was all handle, the points being *non est inventuses*. My sherry was a little corked—or caulked, I don't know which is right, but I am sure I have seen it spelt in the last way, particularly when applied to ships' sides and bottoms.

Altogether, I did not relish my dinner, and I felt sure that something unpleasant was going to happen. I had a *présentiment*, as the French call it, and it was soon realized, in the shape of a note, which ran thus:

"Queen's Bench, Wednesday.

"Dear Brutus Grumps,

"Here I am. Inquire for eleven in ten, and come and dine with me to-morrow at five, as you are locked in at nine if you don't turn out before. Spavin has done it all! I

mean to take the benefit of the act, but of course you won't prove, and I'll pay you afterwards.

"Yours, very truly,
"TOOFAST HARDUPPE."

"Very hard of Spavin, I must say," said I to myself, "and I can't quite understand it, as I gave him a check for his account only yesterday. Prove — of course I shall not prove, and I know Harduppe will pay me honourably."

Well, though I smoked an extra cigar that night, I could not sleep soundly. I thought of my friend in his cell, with all the horrors of a prison about him—chains, fetters, overgrown keys, and apoplectic padlocks, grim-visaged keepers, and cruel, unfeeling turnkeys, haunted me. Had it not been for the lobster-salad which I ate just before I went to bed, I should have had nothing to console me.

I was feverish next day, and felt quite ill, when Pumpkinson, my legal friend, came to call upon me. He sat by my bedside and told me, with a sort of *heigho! triumphe* air,

that "I was done brown." He enumerated the amounts of poor Harduppe's debts, and gave me all the interesting particulars of his case. He mentioned several sums as unpaid which I knew were paid, for I had discharged them myself. He told me that his notes of hand payable on demand were not worth a dump, and that what I had advanced for Miss Julie, Mr. Spavin, and others, was a mere *draw*,—that I had been duped by a set of swindlers, of whom my *friend* (he laid a horribly malicious emphasis on the word) was incomparably the greatest.

I smiled in my sleeve to think what a vast surprise it would have been to him had I shown him my poor friend's letter (the epistle of my imprisoned and much maligned companion, now suffering all the horrible torments of a debtor's cell, including a crust and cold water), containing his promise to pay me *all* after he had got through his little difficulties. I did not show it him, however, for I felt indignant at his mistrustfulness.

At four o'clock I took my seat in an Elephant and Castle omnibus, and whispered

to the cad, as I got in at the Silver Cross, Charing Cross, to put me down at the nearest point leading to the Queen's Bench. He did so, and I got out at a sort of pillar, and went along a road which was lined on the left-hand side by out-door shops filled with old furniture, pianofortes, children's carriages, and a variety of second-hand articles. I could not mistake the prison in which my friend was confined, for the high walls and gloomy *ensemble* indicated it but too plainly.

I arrived at a sort of lobby, and, as I entered it, two very sharp-looking individuals eyed me from head to foot, and one of them, by accident of course, ran his hand over my cloak, which I had put on, warm as the weather was, as a sort of disguise. On inquiring for Mr. Harduppe, eleven in ten, a very polite man offered to show me to his room, he did not call it his *cell*.

I followed him, and paid him the shilling which he informed me was the usual fee. I knocked at the door, and was admitted. I entered, I must say, with a got-up expression of sympathy for my friend's sufferings on my

countenance, but it vanished when I saw him playing at cribbage on a sort of camp bedstead with Mr. Q. Mace and Mr. Spavin—the man "who had done it all."

Harduppe shook me kindly by the hand, and re-introduced me to Mr. Q. as "an insider" like himself, and to Mr. Spavin as "a most respectable horsedealer, who had been kind enough to come over and see him." As this latter introduction was given with a peculiar wink, I knew it was meant *per contra*, so I received Mr. Spavin very coldly.

"Mace, call Dolly," said Harduppe.

He did so, and a dirty fat Irish charwoman made her appearance.

"Dinner, Dolly," said my friend.

"By the powers thin, why not call me Doll, capthin, as ye was used to do when ye was in before?" said the lady.

I looked an interrogative "before?"

"You mean, Doll, when I used to call and see Mr. O'Reilly," said my friend, and I saw him wink, and Dolly play second to it.

"In course, your honour. I manes that,

and nothing but that—but yu'll be for your dhinner?"

Dolly ran away; and in a few minutes the tablecloth, which was not over-clean, had its surface covered with a quarter of lamb and vegetables, to which we all of us did justice.

"You'd like some champagne?" inquired Harduppe, looking at me.

I said yes, for I like champagne.

"Then you must wait till you are out again, for you would hardly believe that the blackguards only allow us one pint of wine or two pints of porter each in the day."

"Shame! shame!" said Spavin and Mace.

"Yes, gentlemen, it is very different now to what it was when I was in—"

Spavin coughed, and Mace sneezed.

"When I was in—the habit of calling on my unfortunate friends here, before the Marshalsea and other low people were admitted, a poor fellow could get drunk like a gentleman then—now, it's so badly regulated, that curse me if I stay in longer than I can help it!" said Harduppe.

"I will take care," said I, "that you shall

not want wine, and everything comfortable. I will send you in a hamper to-morrow morning."

"Hear! hear! hear!" said Spavin.

"Spavin, my dear fellow," (dear fellow to the man who had imprisoned him! I could not make it out) "Spavin, you are, luckily for you, an out-sider. You do not know that we cannot receive that wine which my friend so liberally offers us. But come, as dinner is over, let us light up. We have as much tobacco as we please, and an unlimited order on the fountain pump. So light up and let's be jolly upon *aqua pura*, which is Latin for Adam's ale.

I had but one glass of porter, for we had but a quart among four of us, and I found the cigar did not relish, but made me feel rather qualmish. I suppose I turned a little pale, for my friend asked me what was the matter.

"I am not used," said I, "to smoke a cigar without a little spirits and water, or a little negus."

"Then you must put your pipe out, for you cannot get anything here," said Mace.

"I thought I had heard of such things as tape-shops," said I, "where you could get a little taste of something strong?"

"Ah, my dear Brutus Grumps, that was in the good old days; but now—curse the government—"

"Hear! hear! hear!"

"—And all the prison-disciplinarians; you cannot enjoy life at all," said Toofast Harduppe.

"There is only one way," suggested Mr. Q. Mace.

"Ah! but there's a risk attending it," said Harduppe.

"Not with a respectable-looking man," said Mace.

"Who wears a cloak," said Spavin.

"What is it?" I inquired.

All were silent for a moment, and looked first at the arched ceiling of the cell, and then at their shoes.

"What is it!" said I, "only tell me, and I'll do it."

"A regular trump that," said Spavin.

"And no mistake," added Mr. Q. Mace.

I looked at Harduppe, for a solution of this difficulty.

"By an outsider's bringing it in, and risking three months' imprisonment," said my friend, seriously.

I was staggered at this, and looked so.

"There is not much danger," said Spavin, "if you get a 'pothecary's *vial*, and have it labelled stumacky tinkter."

"Or eye-water," said Mace. "A pint would do at one journey, and any sharp man could go two or three times."

"I'll try it," said I; for I really felt for the poor prisoners who had been used to smoke — but not a *dry* cigar. "I will do it."

I was cloaked with as much zeal as if my valet was dressing me. I walked calmly out, bowing politely to the keepers of the gate. I rushed to a neighbouring doctor's-shop— got a bottle, large and flat, labelled "lotion for the eyes," and then ran to a neighbouring public-house, and had it filled with the best

brandy—not British. I put it carefully in my inside coat-pocket, and, walking to the door again, crossed the first lobby into the inner one, merely observing that I had left my gloves behind me.

"Excuse me, sir," said one of the sharp-looking men, "but you have got a little dirt on your cloak; allow me to rub it off."

I felt as if I should have fainted.

"Why, bless me, Thomas, if the gent has not got something heavy here! Put your hand in and pull it out."

Thomas dived as quick as thought under my cloak; out came the fatal fluid; a fly settling on my nose would have knocked me down.

"Lotion for the eyes—hem! Let us taste it," said Thomas.

"It is poison," said I; "prussic acid and arsenic."

"I'll risk it," said the keeper. "Very fair cognac indeed. Try it, Abraham."

"Capital," said Abraham; "but we must cork up the rest for the governor."

"This way," said Thomas, and I was

hurried through the gate to the governor's house.

He, the governor, smiled a Schedoni smile at me as Abraham told his tale, and produced the eye-water in evidence against me. I did not deny my folly— for I could not call it a crime—but pleaded guilty to the charge of having conveyed, or rather sought to convey, spirits into prison. Could I do otherwise when I had been caught *in ipso facto?* No. I threw myself on my knees, and on the mercy of the court; but it had no mercy on me. I was carried—for I was too nervous and agitated to walk—before a J. P., and sentenced to three months' imprisonment—three long tedious calendar months—and for what? merely for endeavouring to relieve a friend who was suffering from want of spirits.

I wrote to Pumpkinson, to tell him of what had befallen me, and sent the note by a special messenger, promising him a sovereign if he would bring me an answer before I was carried off in the van. He returned very quickly, and brought me, not a written com-

munication, but my legal adviser *in propriâ personâ*. I felt more pleasure at his appearance then than I had ever felt before; for I generally dreaded a visit from him as portending something unpleasant; now he seemed like my guardian angel, and I took his proffered hand and shook it violently. He returned the shake sharply, but shortly, and, without asking me a question, for my note and my messenger had explained every thing, he begged to speak with the committing magistrate in private.

His request was granted as soon as the J. P. had looked at his card—for Pumpkinson is well known as a most respectable solicitor. As the two passed through a side-door into the private apartment, I felt a spark of hope scintillating in my bosom, which was fanned into a little flame of joy, by my messenger, who, as he pocketed my sovereign, whispered,

"It's all right—the beak will be talked over."

And so he was. He returned into court, and, having resumed his chair, ordered me, Brutus Grumps, to be "put up again." I required no putting up, but rushed willingly

to the place assigned to criminals, for I felt that I was respited, if not reprieved.

"Young man," said the J. P., "your friend and solicitor, Mr. Pumpkinson, has explained to me the gross imposition that has been practised upon you by a designing set of men. It appears from his statement that you are naturally a very soft one—"

"A what?" said I.

"A very soft one—that is, not possessed of sufficient strength of mind to guard against the machinations of beings unworthy of the name of men. You are free—go home, and act more wisely for the future."

"What is there to pay?" I inquired; for I had always heard that justice was sold, and rather dear.

Abraham and his man whispered simultaneously that "they should leave it to my generosity as a perfect *gent.*"

I was preparing to hand over a sovereign to each of them, when my legal adviser interfered, frowned down my persecutors, and led me off, whispering to me rather too audibly, for several people laughed at the remark,

"Not to make a greater ass of myself than I had done."

I felt overwhelmed with gratitude to my friend Pumpkinson, and, to show it, offered to stand a champagne dinner at Long's. He declined the offer, and bade me go to my chambers, and reflect on the past over a chop and a jug of toast and water. He promised me, as he left me in the cab, to call upon me in the morning, and let a little daylight into my darkened mind as to the real posture of pecuniary affairs.

I felt that I was about to hear all manner of unpleasantries in the morning, and resolved to get up courage enough to meet them manfully, by enjoying myself for that evening. I dressed and went out; ordered a capital little spread at Dubourg's, and, after a bottle or two of claret, went to the theatre.

There I met Spavin and tried to cut him, but he was so good-natured as to take a seat in the box by my side, and to explain to me the plot of the play, and tell me the names of all who had parts in it, that I could not refuse his invitation to join him in a bit of

supper at a house where he was well known. I do not know what the name of the house was, but it was not far from the Haymarket, and every thing was remarkably nice, and the wine, sparkling Burgundy, was particularly good, but so very strong that I fell asleep soon after supper—I believe—for I know nothing of what happened to me until I found myself waking from a sort of painful stupor under the table of the upstairs room in which we had supped. I rang for a waiter, and asked what was to pay. He told me, in reply, that Mr. Spavin had settled the bill. I walked down stairs, very much pleased with Spavin's gentlemanly conduct; and, as it was broad daylight, and I was in my dress-suit, I jumped into a cab, told the driver where to set me down, and, to my surprise, fell into a deep sleep again, from which I was roused by the cabman, who shook me like a dose of medicine.

I told my valet to pay cabby his fare, and give him an extra shilling for the trouble he had had in waking me, and rushed to my rooms, when, to my surprise and dismay, I

found it wanted but a quarter to nine, at which hour my friend Pumpkinson had promised to be at my rooms to breakfast.

"Breakfast for two instantly," said I to James. "And give me my morning dress—take the things carefully out of my pockets—hand me my purse, and see to the breakfast arrangements as quickly as you can."

"Purse, sir? where *was* it?" asked James.

"In the left side pocket of my trousers it *is*," said I.

"Nothing of the sort either left side or right."

"Try the waistcoat."

"Nothing there, sir, but the *theayter* check."

"Then it must be in one of my coat-pockets," said I.

"There is a card-case and a handkerchief, and that's all," said James, holding up the articles to my view.

"Never mind," said I. "I dare say I left it in my desk when I went out. Go and see about breakfast."

James went as I bade him. When he was

gone, I began to "try back" upon all the proceedings of the past night, and could not but remember that I had my purse safe when I paid Dubourg's dinner-bill and my admission to the little theatre in the Haymarket. Whilst I was ruminating painfully on the possibility of having been robbed by the cabman or the waiter—for to suspect Spavin never once entered my thoughts—I fell asleep again, and was roused by my valet, who came in to say that Mr. Pumpkinson was waiting for his breakfast. I was very nervous and very heavy with sleep, and would have given worlds to be allowed to go to bed for a few hours; but I resolved to conquer the feeling, and, after plunging my head into a basin of cold water, and shuffling on a morning-dress, I hurried in to join my friend.

I felt that he was eyeing me attentively all breakfast-time, although he pretended to be applying himself to his roll and coffee, and, as soon as he had finished, and James had removed the cloth, he pulled out a huge bundle of papers, and made me very uncomfortable, in a short time, by proving to me that I had

spent considerably more of my income than I ought to have spent, considering that I could only touch the interest and not the principal of my fortune.

"In what must this end?" said he. "In borrowing and ruin."

"Pooh, pooh! my dear fellow," said I, cheerfully, "I will retire into the country and pull up."

"Ay, Mr. Brutus Grumps, ay, sir, pull up and spend a quiet evening or two, such as you did last night."

"What *do* you mean?' said I.

"Read *that*," said Pumpkinson, placing *The Times* in my hand, and pointing with his long white finger to a particular paragraph.

I read it thus:

"Information was brought to our office at an early hour this morning, that Mr. Ringbone Spavin, the celebrated *leg* and horse-dealer, had levanted, leaving all his debts on the Derby and Oaks unsettled. It is said that he acquired the means of setting out on his travels by *hocussing* a very soft young

man, and robbing him of his purse, at a house not far from Bury Street. We are happy to be able to add that he, in a most gentlemanly way, paid for the supper and wines before he left. The name of the hocussed gentleman is said to be Mr. Brutus Grumps, whose appearance before a magistrate for trying to convey spirits into the Queen's Bench for the benefit of that notorious scamp, Mr. Toofast Harduppe, excited so much amusement yesterday."

I was quite confounded: I had not a word to say for myself, although I felt convinced that both Spavin and myself had been grossly calumniated.

Pumpkinson read me a long lecture, and gave me a great deal of excellent advice, but I was so sleepy, that I have but a faint recollection of what he said. He left me, apparently annoyed, if not disgusted, and I went to my bed—from which I did not rise for some weeks—for I was ill—wretchedly ill—and the doctor said I must have been taking some poisonous narcotic or other, which had well nigh "cooked my goose for me," an ex-

pression that implies, I believe, the same meaning as that we used at Rotherwick—"settled my hash."

On my partial recovery I was ordered to leave town for a time, and try country air and exercise. I hired a furnished cottage at Fulham, on the river's brink, and soon became very fond of boating and sailing about on the river, in which I was encouraged by the watermen, who, whenever I treated them to a little London porter, never failed to assure me that I sculled as well as any of the Leanders, and sailed closer on a wind than any man on the river.

These amusements were very agreeable and economical too—far more so than riding and driving, for boats don't eat as horses do, and it's only the prime cost, and a little outlay now and then for paint, a broken scull, a mast or spar carried away, that you have to provide for. Pumpkinson was quite pleased as he heard my plans, saw my way of living, and sailed about in my little cutter. Indeed, I never saw him make himself more agreeable, until I landed him at the Red House at Bat-

tersea, where I had invited all the Fulham and Putney watermen, with their wives and children, to a little bit of supper.

What a lecture he did read me on my softness and extravagance! In vain I explained to him that I had only ordered three or four legs of mutton, with trimmings and London porter—he pished and pshawed, bounced out of the long room, and left me to enjoy my friends' company as well as I could—which I did very much. I say *friends* advisedly, for they behaved as friends, and saw me safe home and put to bed, without so much as wronging me of a shilling, which they might easily have done, as—I am sorry to say it—the number of speeches I made caused me to feel thirsty, and take more fluid than I ought to have done.

Well, after I had been at Fulham about six months, I received a very unexpected visit from my old friend, Toofast Harduppe, with whom I had been forbidden to correspond by Mr. Pumpkinson. I was sitting at my luncheon when he entered, with a lady leaning on his arm, in whom I could not fail to recognise

Mademoiselle Julie. I was so confounded by the unexpected appearance of the pair, that I did not rise to do the polites, as I ought to have done, but sat staring at them, until Harduppe came forward, and, shaking me by the hand, begged leave to introduce me to Mrs. Harduppe.

Could I do less than congratulate them on their union, and wish them a long life and a merry one? No. I did so, and begged them to join me at luncheon. They did; and we passed a couple of very happy hours, during the whole of which the lady continued to eat and drink, and her husband to explain to me all that had happened to him since we met.

It appeared that he had settled with his creditors, by sacrificing his landed property among them, and, as he was unwilling to lead an idle life, and appeal to his rich relations for support, he had set up in the lace trade, a business in which his wife — whom he had married through gratitude to her for her unremitting attentions to him while in prison — was fully capable of assisting him, as it had

been her occupation in early life, before she went upon the boards of the theatre.

"And how does the trade answer?" I inquired.

"Admirably," said Harduppe; "if I had but a larger capital, I could realize a larger fortune than that which I have sacrificed to my creditors, in a very few months."

Julie merely said, "*sans doute.*"

"I could afford to give forty per cent. for a loan," said Harduppe.

I would willingly have lent him a thousand for half the interest, but Pumpkinson had so managed me, that I could only touch the interest of my property, and that monthly, and so I informed Harduppe, who told me that my name on a bill would do quite as well as cash.

"*Sans doute,*" said Julie. "In ma countries there is more names as cash in business. You will put your pretty leetle *main* to the leetle pit of paper *pour mon marie, n'est ce pas?*"

I positively refused, in spite of Julie's insinuating ways.

" For although," said
ready to lend a real frien
small interest, if I have it
nor ever will, put my nam

Toofast Harduppe in va
he would meet the bill wh
should have no trouble in
the mere signing of it.
fused, for although I ma
some matters, I am not
name to a bill. No, no.

He offered me a share
security, if I would only
not going to turn tradesm
brought up at a public sc
gentleman, and so I told

" Well, then," said he
help me by adding to my
would be of great advant
can and I know will aid
ter, which will be of esse
and very little trouble
you."

" *Sans doute*, it is su
said Julie, picking the la

I promised to do any thing for him but put my name to a bill.

"You have a yacht?" said he.

I nodded assent, and pointed to where she was lying.

"Ay, a very pretty little cutter; I suppose you hire a waterman to sail her for you."

I was indignant at the supposition, and told him that I and James, my valet, managed a little thing like that easily.

"Did you ever take a sail below bridge?"

"Yes, of course; I white-bait at Greenwich and Blackwall frequently," said I, "and sail there and back."

"You never sailed to Gravesend?—too far for a little thing of about six tons."

"Eight tons," said I. "I have thought of running over to France in her."

"Try Gravesend first," said Harduppe; "run down there to-morrow—the tide will serve, and the wind too, if it stays where it is. You will find it a delightful trip, and be able to render me the little service I alluded to; or I ought rather to say to render a ser-



duke, making
parcel with the
"—From the
which you will f
will give you a
great friend of J
excellent wines
could so contriv
about an hour a
as he would be
" And is that
" That is all
will give you sa
wedding present
" And a ting
mode you not a
" I may rely
put his hat upo
with me at my

"Not a word," I replied.

Well, morning came, and I was glad to find the wind still favourable. I got on board at an early hour and started, and as soon as I had cleared the bridges and the pool, I put on every stitch of canvass the boat would carry, and sailed rapidly down the river. I went ashore at Erith, and dined early, meaning to get to Gravesend about dusk, and sup with Captain Constant on board the La Lune.

I managed very cleverly to get on board just as it was growing dark. I handed in Harduppe's note, and the captain came upon deck to the gangway, and in excellent English welcomed me on board. By his advice I sent James, with the yacht, ashore off Tilbury, where there is a comfortable inn near the ferry, with orders to be alongside just as day broke in the morning, or a little before, if possible.

We had a nice little fish supper, some capital claret, and a little very fine *eau de vie.* I did not exceed in the least, but by Captain Constant's advice turned in early, in order to be fitted for rising early in the morning.



between the two.
sleep ; but either
agree with me, c
against the clink
prevented me fro
sound nap, as I

As I lay awak
out of his bertl
steadily, as if to
lift up the upper
side of his matt
mass of somethi
up with great c
and put into my
He then sewed
again, and slipp

I fell asleep,
could contain,
secrecy, and was

for me while I slept. I thanked him for his kindness, and shook hands with him, after he had told me that I should find Julie's parcel at the bottom of my *sac de nuit*, which he carried up for me as all the crew were asleep, except one, who was keeping watch upon deck.

Just as I got off from the schooner's sides, and had hoisted all sails, I saw another man appear on her deck, who, in a most impudent tone, ordered me to lay-to. I am not to be bullied in that way by any body, so I turned my boat's head into the tide, and away I went. James told me he thought the man who had hailed me was a custom-house officer, but I did not care a fig for that.

As the wind was rather against us, we had to make several tacks before we could round the point, and, just as we did so, I saw a four-oared boat pulling right into us. I shouted out, "Look ahead!" but on they came straight for us, although I jammed the helm down as hard as I could.

"Look ahead, you lubbers!" I cried, just as the boat was laid alongside of me, and the

man who had been steering her sprang on board.

"I say — though — this is my boat — my private property—I'll trouble you—"

"And I will trouble you for your carpet-bag," said the man, very civilly.

It was lying on the top of the half-deck, and he very coolly took it up and opened it, and then turned out every thing, including Julie's present.

"This is it," said he, opening the parcel. "Ah! as I thought—splendid Valenciennes lace—not a bad morning's work. I'll trouble you to step aboard our boat, sir, and I will take charge of your yacht, and be at Gravesend nearly as soon as you."

To cut a long story short, I was convicted of smuggling lace, in which trade Harduppe and Mademoiselle Julie—for she was no more Madame Harduppe than I was — had long been engaged. I lost my yacht, and had to pay a large sum of money; and, but for my true friend Pumpkinson, should have fared worse than I did. Since then, I have been living quietly in the country with my new

yacht, which Pumpkinson bought for me upon the condition that I would not venture within fifty miles of London, nor correspond with Harduppe as long as he remained in England.

Thus ended Brutus Grumps's story just as we landed at Swanage, and sought that comfortable inn, the Ship, kept by as jolly an old sailor as ever had the gout, and called it a sprained ankle. I stayed a few days with Brutus, gave him the best advice I could, and got him to put me ashore in Portsmouth harbour.

In a few months I saw in a London paper that Mr. Toofast Harduppe was transported for fifteen years for borrowing a gentleman's nag without his permission; and in the same paper, by a strange chance, the marriage of Mr. Brutus Grumps to Miss Georgina Pumpkinson. I concluded that the lawyer had wisely thought that the best thing he could do to save a nice snug property was to appoint a guardian for life over a man who had, on so many occasions, proved himself such a very soft one.



CH

KIT

She was tall and
And her cheeks

" Well! to *m*
shocking—I mi
abominate *stron*
quated Miss Lon
" What do y
her companion,
right to use; bu
then, as if by n
pleased her empl
" Wilkinson,
never mind—I n

six minutes. The street-keeper ought to be severely reprimanded for allowing such improprieties in public—I might say indecencies; only, as I said before, I abominate *strong* language."

"She is very pretty," said Wilkinson, and she sighed as she said so, for she herself was very plain in form and feature.

"Pretty, indeed! and does that justify such very improper proceedings? Who is she?" asked Miss Longiver, sharply.

"I really do not know, madam; we have been but two days in Tumberville, and I can hardly be expected to know—"

"You can inquire, I presume. You really, Wilkinson, are what—if I did not abominate vulgarities—I should call a very slow coach."

"Not a male coach, madam, at any rate," replied Wilkinson, hoping to extort a smile from her employer.

"Miss Wilkinson," said the lady, frowning ominously, "if ever you venture again to perpetrate a worn-out witticism in my presence, I advertise at once for another companion—so look out."

"Of the window, or for another situation?" asked Wilkinson, in humbler tones.

"Impertinent!" said Miss Longiver; "but I pardon it—as the result of my having used a vulgarity, a thing I so deeply abominate. But there!—do look out of the window—there! I declare if that tall young woman in the gipsy-hat is not speaking and laughing with the seventh man. I must leave these lodgings if the library over the way is to be the scene of such gross—I will know who she is, at any rate—*sonnez*, *sonnez*, my love."

Wilkinson rushed to the bell, and, in her eagerness to oblige her employer, gave the riband so hard a jerk, that it came down with a run, as the sailors say. Miss Longiver took advantage of the short period which elapsed between the tug and the appearance of the maid, to assure Miss Wilkinson that, whatever expenses she had incurred by her unnecessary violence, she, Miss Longiver, was not going to liquidate them out of *her* purse. Wilkinson, however, jumped upon a chair, and, with a turn of the wire, restored the bell-bull to its former appearance.

"Very cleverly done," said the lady; "it *looks* as useful as ever. Only, for the future, remember that I abominate strong pulls as much as I do strong language. Where can that good-for-nothing, idle hussy of a maid be?"

"Here be I, mum," said Phœbe, arranging her apron.

"Why did you not answer the bell sooner? I am sure it rung loud and long enough."

"It did tingle a good un—that's for certain; but how could I come sooner when I was down upon my knees and up to my elbows in—"

"Never mind what you were down upon or up to—but come here—quick—or the creature will be gone."

"I was not up to nothing wrong," said Phœbe, tossing her head, and walking slowly, very slowly, for she was indignant, across the room.

"Do not indulge in vulgarity, young woman, I abominate it; but tell me who that dressed-up person, standing on the steps of the library-door, is," said Miss Longiver.

"Which does you mean? Pint her out," said Phœbe.

"We mean the very pretty girl in the gipsy-hat," said Wilkinson.

"Oh! that," said Phœbe, turning up her little nose—"that's *only* Kitty Dangerous!"

"And who is she?"

"No better than she mought be, I'll be bound!" said Phœbe, winking at both the ladies, and giving her head a shake.

"Not an unfortunate—"

"Oh! no," said Phœbe, "not by no means—she's well enough to do in the world."

"A milliner and dress-maker, I presume?" said Wilkinson.

"Oh, dear no," said Phœbe, "she's a lady, and no mistake—wears silk stockings—puts out her washing, and plays on the pi-anner."

"A little damaged in reputation?" inquired Miss Longiver.

"Not as I knows on, mum," said Phœbe.

"Then how can you dare to use strong language, a thing I abominate, and insinuate that she is no better than she ought to be?"

"I never said no such thing, mum, I'll take

my davy. All I means is, as Kitty's so pretty, forsooth, that all the men—"

"Never mind the men, Phœbe; don't be improper."

"All the men is so taken with her, that, when she's by one, one can't get a look, let alone a smile, even from the baker's boy," said Phœbe, turning to the mirror, and examining her very plain face in it.

"Jealous," whispered Wilkinson.

"*Sans doute*," said the employer.

"If I was the mother of her," said Phœbe, still looking into the mirror, "I wouldn't allow her to take the liberty—"

"Liberties?—does she take liberties?" almost shrieked the two ladies.

"I said liberty, mum—liberty and liberties is very different things. She takes the liberty of going out whenever she chooses, and of talking with the men—that is, the gentlemen—for our townsfolk isn't good enough for sich as she," said Phœbe.

"Young woman?" said Miss Longiver, solemnly.

"I isn't a young woman, mum; I'se middle-

aged, like some other people, only *I* don't care who knows it," replied Phœbe; "and I'm off, for I expect the back-parlour to ring in a minute, and it's about the time as the baker calls."

"Stop, Phœbe, stop — who is that rather good-looking man to whom Miss — what-do-ye-call-her—"

"Kitty Dangerous, mum."

"Well, then, Miss Kitty Dangerous, is speaking?"

"Can't say, mum, but he's a beauty, ain't he?"

"You may go, Phœbe," said the lady.

"I suppose I may," said Phœbe, "and if I'm wanted again, you can ring; only don't pull *too* hard, and try t'other rope. I was at the door when that ingenious individual there replaced the pull—that's all."

Away bounced Phœbe; and poor Wilkinson, finding her plans for concealing the damage done to the bell-pull discovered, was very much chagrined. Miss Longiver observed her chagrin, and, to her *employé's* surprise, consoled her with a promise of

having the weak bell-pull replaced by a strong one, "although she really did abominate any thing *strong*."

Miss Wilkinson could not find, in the very deepest depth of her bosom, any adequate reason for such an unexampled instance of her employer's good-nature and generosity: until Miss Longiver, casting a look at the handsome man who was talking to Miss Kitty Dangerous, suggested to her the positive necessity of their going over to the library to exchange the very dull book that the librarian had sent them for something more lively. Then Wilkinson began to imagine that she had discovered a motive. We shall see if she imagined rightly.

Tumberville was an infant watering-place—so young, indeed, that, like a baby in longs, it wanted a nurse to cherish it, and bring it to a mature growth. Miss Longiver, although her protracted maidenhood rendered her unfit to nurse anything but cats and puppy dogs, having read "St. Ronan's Well," fancied that, by patronising the New Brighton, she might emulate the pre-eminence in society acquired

by the Lady Penelope Penfeather. She, therefore, hired the best apartments in the place — the first-floor of a speculating linen-draper, who let her have them rather cheaper than usual, in hopes that her name and influence — for she kept a carriage and a companion — might bring customers to his establishment. Although she had an excellent income, the lady was decidedly stingy, or, as she called it — abominating strong terms — economical; and, when she took the apartments, made up her mind to screw a part of the rent out of her *table*, much to poor Wilkinson's horror, who had an excellent appetite, and to Phœbe's disgust, for she was fed chiefly upon what "came down" after the lodgers' meals were over. The coachman being engaged to "board himself," did not care one rush about the interior arrangements, and, as he was sure his mistress could not calculate the exact quantity that two horses ought to eat, as he told his friends, "he took his board out in oats and split beans."

Miss Longiver had offended her family by

exercising an insupportable despotism over every little twig of it; or, to speak more correctly, they had offended her by not submitting tamely to be treated despotically even by a relation, who had independent property in her own right. She accordingly quitted the roof of her brother, with whom she had resided some months after her mother's death, and, for the reasons above explained, took up her residence in the newly-invented watering-place — classically called Tumberville, after one Mr. Tumber, a speculating builder, who was resolved to add to his fortune by raising a town, and to his fame by emulating royalty, and "creating a pier."

The little fishing village abutting on Mr. Tumber's land was astonished out of its propriety when it saw an hotel, with a large assembly-room in its front, a grand public bath, a library, with billiard-rooms attached, and a fine row of lofty houses, perched upon a bit of rising ground, which it had been in the habit of calling "the hill," but which was now dignified into "the cliff." It could hardly believe its eyes when it saw all these



found that the
were fully equa
could charge v
its value for e
and farinaceou
Tumber as a fo
began to reap th
madness, it set
clever man, and
some piece of
half-pay captai
appointed mast
New Brighton,
by a respectabl
in donkeys, and
tain's speech wi

"But who w

While Miss
last "shade of

mother in a neat little cottage on the outskirts of Tumberville, the garden of which, and a little meadow adjoining it, ran down to the beach.

She was but a mere child when she was deprived of her father, and, being an only child of her mother, and she a widow, it is not to be wondered at that she was petted, fondled, and indulged, in the way in which *only* children are indulged. She gave evident signs of beauty in her childhood, which were confirmed as she grew up. She was, when she grew to womanhood, to use the words I have quoted for a "heading,"

> As tall and as straight as a poplar tree,
> And her cheeks were as red as a rose.

To say that she was admired by every one in the neighbourhood is to use but faint terms in her praise. She was, in fact, "the toast of the country round, and every one who could procure an introduction to Kitty Dangerous looked upon himself as a lucky man. The young women who resided about her were, of course, rather jealous of her, and

attributed to the influence of her beauty and boldness, as they were pleased to term her innocent freedom, the losses and crosses which true love meets with in this our lower world.

Kitty would have been spoilt by her only parent, and might probably have "gone wrong," to use a favourite phrase, had it not been for the clergyman of the parish, who used his influence with her mother, and induced her to allow her daughter to be educated with his own children, with whom in after-life—that is, after her education was completed—she lived on terms of the most intimate friendship. Frederick and Jane Somers were her only real allies, and with them she used to gallop over the sands on her donkey — the only rideable animal her mother's small income would enable her to keep—up the hills, over the downs, and, indeed, wherever her fancy led her. Happy, truly happy, were the three friends in their innocent amusements; but, like all other joys this life affords us, they were not to last for ever. Frederick Somers was sent to col-

lege, and Jane was placed in a situation, as governess, in order that Mr. Somers might devote the whole that he could spare from his scanty income to his son's university education.

The parting was a trial to all parties. Jane wept upon her companion's neck ere she quitted her; but report says Frederick hung upon her lips, and with his last kiss whispered a promise that, if his career were successful at college, Kitty should speedily exchange the name of Dangerous for that of Somers. Report goes on to add that Frederick entered Oxford with a light heart, in consequence of something that Kitty whispered in reply.

When her friends had left her, Kitty was indeed alone; for her mother was an invalid, and unable to accompany her daughter in her rambles. The Parsonage was her only resource, and thither she wandered day after day, in hopes of hearing something of her early friends. As the little village was at that time a retired spot, she wandered to the Parsonage in safety, and met only those who were glad to exchange friendly greetings with

her; but, when Mr. Tumber, the speculating builder, chose to convert the quiet fishing spot into a would-be-fashionable watering-place, Kitty did not choose to be restrained in her pleasant rides, and, by galloping about the country in all directions, did not fail to draw upon herself the observation of every stranger who came down to visit the place, and thereby acquired, without knowing it, the name of "the bold lady of the old place."

One or two of the smirking young gentlemen, who acted as architects' clerks, while the buildings were in progress, had the impudence to presume on Miss Kitty's vivacity, and offended her by that insolent style of treatment, which is so peculiarly disgusting and annoying to the right-minded female. One, indeed, ventured to snatch her hand and place it to his lips, but a severe blow from a hand-whip taught him a lesson he did not easily forget. Another, presuming to come to the cottage, and request an introduction to its youthful occupant, was ushered into the parlour, and requested to explain the object of his unsolicited visit. The explanation was

received with such a burst of contemptuous mirth that he was glad to escape with so slight a punishment for his temerity.

The description which these two young "gents." gave to their companions of the mode in which their rude advances had been received, freed Miss Kitty from any further attempts to be addressed against her will, and, wherever she passed on her donkey, whether attended by her servant or not, she was allowed to pass without any manifestation of jocularity on the part of those, who, before her resolute conduct was made known to them, would not have scrupled to say or look something very impudent indeed.

A protector Kitty did not need, for every man, woman, and child, in "the old place," loved and respected her. Her mother's means were but small, but it never was known that in case of sickness or distress the widow's cruise failed, or that the daughter's hand was wanting, to administer its contents. When the new place was built, or rather being built, the fame of Kitty, as a kind and generous girl, was not lessened, but rather increased.

Not an accident occurred to the poor workmen—not a child was born to them, or taken from them by sickness, but Kitty was ready to administer medicines, and to proffer comfort to the humble creatures in their great need and necessity.

We think we have said enough to give our readers an insight into the character of the "young person," as Miss Longiver called her, and must now work out our little tale by returning to that lady's visit to the library, at whose door she had been shocked by observing Miss Kitty's fascinations.

"Wilkinson, my dear, request that young person to let us pass," said Miss Longiver, when she arrived at the steps of the door, leading to the public library.

"Will you allow us, miss?" said the companion, laying a violent stress on the last word.

The young man with whom Miss Kitty was talking quietly raised a glass to his right eye, and left just sufficient space on his side of the steps to allow the two importants to pass.

"I must really have this state of things

altered if I remain—to be obliged to jostle any body and everybody is what I cannot put up with. If I did not abominate strong language, I should say it was subjecting one's-self to catch contagious disorders," said Miss Longiver.

Wilkinson was about to do a bit of toady, but, catching Miss Kitty's eye, she withheld the remark that was upon the very tip of her tongue, and followed her employer into the library.

"Do you know that very rude person, Sir Edward?" asked Miss Kitty of the very handsome man who had been talking to her—the "seventh man," as Miss Longiver called him.

"I assure you I had rather not," said he; "but let us go in and see who the rude creature is. We may get a rise out of her."

"I must leave you, Sir Edward, for my mother expects me, and I will write the letter you named this evening, and meet you here to-morrow morning," said Miss Kitty.

"You heard that, eh, Wilkinson?—upon my word—" said Miss Longiver.

"Excessively impudent!" cried the toady.

"Well, hurried as I am, I must know who these two women are, so, 'Go on, I'll follow thee,'" said Kitty to Sir Edward Worthington, as he led the way into the library.

Miss Longiver walked up the shop and down it again without noticing the noddings meant for bows, and smirkings intended for most enticing smiles of the librarian, or the book containing the subscribers' names, which was placed upon a handsome mahogany desk in the centre of the shop. The fact is, she had not made up her mind whether to subscribe or not. She had not yet calculated accurately whether it would be more economical to pay one guinea for her quarter's novel reading, or twopence for each volume she might be inclined to peruse. It struck her, however, that if she intended to carry out the plans she had conceived, of being the lady patroness of Tumberville, she ought to make herself known at once by putting down her name, not only in the subscription book of the library, but also in one or two others arranged by its side for funds in aid of the curate and the master of the ceremonies.

She whispered to Wilkinson to keep an eye on Kitty and her companion, and then walked majestically towards the desk. The librarian watched her with anxious eye as she turned over the leaves and examined the names of those who had already subscribed, and he felt himself a richer man by one guinea when he saw her take up a pen and examine its nib preparatory to signing her name. When it was done, he bowed once; but when he saw her affix her signature to the other books that lay beside his own, he made just as many bows, increasing in profundity, as he calculated a three-guinea subscriber was entitled to. Poor Wilkinson, who had an eye to her own interest as well as to Kitty and Sir Edward, sighed deeply, for she knew that the deficiency then made in her employer's purse would be made up by an additional turn or two of the economical screw, and that mutton-chops would be "the order of the day" for an indefinite period.

"Now to see who she is," said Sir Edward, walking to the desk which Miss Longiver had deserted for the book-table. On

seeing her name, he whispered, "Oh! my prophetic soul! my—not uncle, but—most disagreeable aunt, whom I have not seen for years, and hoped never to see again."

While Miss Kitty was hearing from Sir Edward a whispered history of Miss Longiver, that lady, under the pretence of wanting some particular book, summoned the librarian by a beck, and asked of him who the gentleman, speaking with the young *female*, was.

"Sir Edward Worthington, madam, came down last night by boat, puts up at the Royalty, with one servant, two horses, and a remarkably neat *brisky*, which arrived per road this morning."

"Thank you, sir—enough—you may go—tell the lady in the blue cloak I would speak to her."

Wilkinson, who was gloomily viewing in her mind's eye a long vista of mutton-chops and Cape Madeira, "came at the call."

"Oh! Wilkinson, dear," whispered Miss Longiver, convulsively, putting both her hands upon the spot where her heart ought to

have been, as if to restrain its throbbings, "here is a sad discovery!"

"You have not lost your purse in your walk, or your—"

"Pooh! child! I have lost nothing, but have found—"

"What?" cried Wilkinson, eagerly, hoping it might be an unexpected additional five pound-note.

"A nephew—a nephew—a sister's child in that fine young man. Oh! dearest, oh! how gladly would I acknowledge him!—but how can I do so under such very painful circumstances? When I behold him with my own eyes degrading himself and his family by what I should call—if I did not abominate strong terms—carrying on a public *liaison* with a disreputable young person, what can I——what am I do?"

Wilkinson thought for a moment, and advised the indignant aunt to return home, write a note, and invite her impudent, if not guilty, nephew to dinner at six precisely. We must confess that the advice was not disinterested. She felt the impossibility of

setting chops and Cape before an adolescent baronet.

Miss Longiver nodded assent, rose from her seat, and, having gathered her shawl as closely as she could around her, whisked by the young lady, whose conduct had offended her, as if afraid of being contaminated by a mere brush of her garments, and hurried to her apartments. There she seated herself in such a position as to be able to see, without being seen, all that might pass at the library-door.

Wilkinson suggested writing a note, and ordering a nice little dinner from the confectioner's; but Miss Longiver took no notice of the suggestion. She kept her eyes fixed upon the library, and as she watched, rapidly gave her companion an insight into the natural history of Sir Edward Worthington, which she did in very strong language, although she professed to abominate it; for her sister, who had been left a widow early, had refused to admit her to a share of her comfortable home, or to her councils in the management and disposal of her funds and

family; in fact, had closed her doors against her for merely having recommended her a very pious young man as a tutor to her son, and advised her to educate him at home instead of sending him first to Eton and then to Cambridge.

"You see the result, love; his morals are evidently corrupted by the public system of education. Maternal unwillingness to receive advice has already caused the destruction of two souls—for it is quite impossible for that embodied personification of impropriety there to listen to his fascinating words, and not be lost."

This was said as Sir Edward gave Miss Kitty a parting shake of the hand, and smilingly walked away on his road to his inn.

"And now, madam, shall we despatch the note and order dinner?" inquired Miss Wilkinson, as soon as the young lady and the baronet were out of sight.

"We will despatch the note certainly, and there will be time enough to order dinner when a favourable answer arrives. He may be engaged, and if so, as I still suffer horri-

bly from dyspepsia, I think, dear, I shall merely order a chop. I know *you* prefer them to those indigestible amalgamations which are concocted by confectioners."

Wilkinson sighed as she placed the writing materials before her lady, and fondly hoped that the invitation might be immediately accepted.

The note—a mere formal invite—stating that Miss Longiver would be most happy to see her nephew at dinner at six, and renew an intimacy that had been unfortunately broken off by no fault of her—Miss L.—was written and sent by the coachman, who returned in a few minutes with a verbal message to say, "Sir Edward was very much obliged, but was much more agreeably engaged at the hour named."

Wilkinson was annoyed, and vented her annoyance on the baronet, by abusing him in powerful language for sending so impertinent an answer to so civil a note.

Miss Longiver sighed deeply, held her handkerchief to her eyes, and sobbingly attributed her nephew's rudeness to maternal suggestions, the errors of the public system

of education; and, above all, to the influence of Kitty Dangerous, whom she resolved from that moment to ruin—if she possibly could.

Her amiable resolution was confirmed by a visit from the curate's lady, who, as in duty bound, called to pay her respects to a subscriber to her husband's book. From this lady Miss Longiver learnt the history of Miss Kitty's past life and present engagement to Frederick Somers, the son of the clergyman of the Old Place, which she, the curatess, heartily hoped might soon end in a wedding.

"They were such a charming couple—evidently born for each other—and so beloved by everybody who knew them."

Six o'clock struck, and, just as Phœbe had placed two very small mutton-chops, four young potatoes, and a pint of very small table-beer, on rather a dingy cloth, a rattling of wheels was heard, and Sir Edward was seen driving a very neat britzschka and a splendid pair of grays down the principal street of Tumberville.

"There he goes," said Miss Longiver, lay-

ing down her knife and fork, "a true Worthington, seeking pleasure rather than cultivating that friendly feeling which ought always to exist in families. If I did not abominate strong—Wilkinson! what *are* you doing?"

"I was merely taking my chop while it was hot, and listening to you, madam," said Wilkinson, who fancied her employer sufficiently abstracted in mind not to notice her abstraction of the bigger, by a pennyweight, chop of the two.

"I *am* surprised; but never mind—I have no appetite," sighed the lady.

Her companion was very glad to hear it, but did not say so. She had strong hopes of appropriating the second chop, but she was disappointed, and that too by an error of her own. She, in the midst of the mastication of the first chop, was weak enough to suggest to her weeping lady, that the baronet, instead of driving out to call or meet Miss Kitty Dangerous, was going out to dine with some friend in the neighbourhood. Miss Longiver, hoping it might be so, dried up her tears, ate

up her chop, and said that she had made a most excellent dinner. Wilkinson hinted at a relay, but when Phœbe came, the cheese—an American at 6*d.* per pound—was ordered in, and, when the meal was ended, the dessert—four summer apples and six greengages—was placed on the table, flanked with two wine-glasses, and, to poor Wilkinson's horror, a decanter of Cape at 18s. per doz.

In all our misfortunes and mishaps, there are some palliating circumstances; and Wilkinson, indignant, as she justly was, at being treated so scurvily, was considerably relieved by seeing her employer thoroughly upset just as she was tasting the Cape and pronouncing it excellent. The britzschka returned, and in it were seated Kitty Dangerous and an aged female, who, there could be no doubt from the likeness, was her mother.

Miss Longiver gave a shudder, rushed to the window, opened it, and saw the carriage turn into the gateway of the Royalty Hotel. Wilkinson took two rapidly-poured-out glasses of Cape before her lady returned to the table, to assure her that she had not the least doubt

that the mother was quite as bad as the daughter.

"Put up the decanter and give me the writing-desk, dearest—I'll mar their plans."

Wilkinson popped the diminished Cape very quickly into the cupboard, fearing detection; and when she had placed the desk before her, her lady sat down to it and wrote several letters, which were dropped into the post-office with her own hand, as she and Wilkinson passed it on their way to the beach for an evening stroll.

On their way, they were addressed by a very polite gentleman, who, after sundry bows, announced himself as Captain Cringer, the M. C. of Tumberville, who thus took an unusual, probably, but the earliest method of paying his respects to a lady whose name and address he had only been able to ascertain that very afternoon, by finding it inserted in his book.

Miss Longiver was particularly gracious, and begged she might have frequent opportunities of cultivating the acquaintance of so polite a person; and, at Wilkinson's sugges-

tion, invited him to take tea with her that evening, an invitation that was not declined, for Captain Cringer had seen the lady's very comfortable carriage in the stand-at-livery department of the Royalty Hotel. To narrate what passed over the table, which was well furnished with gunpowder and cakes of all sorts, will occupy too much space—suffice it to say, that before the M. C. left, he was authorized to issue cards, to every *proper* visiter, to a ball, to be given by Miss Longiver in the Assembly-room, which he was authorized to hire, with an efficient band, for the occasion.

On the morning following this memorable evening, several anonymous letters were received by different individuals.

In the first place, Frederick's mother, Mrs. Somers, opened one, which ran thus :—

" Is it possible that a mother, the wife of a clergyman, can allow her absent son to be deceived by a wanton syren? The writer warns her that K. D. is carrying on a flirtation with a young man, who is putting up at the hotel, and is a most disreputable character."

Mrs. Somers showed the letter to her husband, and both of them had a hearty laugh over it.

A second was received by Mrs. Dangerous. Thus *it* ran :—

" Abominating the use of strong language, as the writer of this does, she must say that the *spectacle* of a mother riding out with her daughter in the carriage of that daughter's *paramour* is a sight truly horrifying to feminine purity, and will not fail to bring down on the unworthy parent's hoary head the powerful thunderbolts of public indignation."

It was shown to Miss Kitty by her mamma, who in return showed her mamma another note, evidently in the same handwriting, which contained these few but important words :—

" Your abominable conduct is watched, and duly reported to your dupe—the unsuspecting and ever-confiding Frederick Somers."

After exchanging notes, the mother and daughter exchanged looks, and fairly shrieked with laughter.

Sir Edward Worthington was favoured with this bit of advice.

"The scion of an ancient family ought not to degrade that family by openly driving a wanton and her conniving parent about the streets of a public watering-place. His disgraceful conduct will be reported to his indulgent but deluded mother, and to the unfortunate young man, who fondly believes that the affections of an artful hussy are bestowed upon him alone."

How Sir Edward did laugh as he showed the note to Kitty and her mother, and how they did join in the laugh! Their merriment would have roused even an hypochondriacal Quaker.

Sir Edward's mother, too, was informed anonymously that—

"Her unworthy son was spending his time, talents, and money, at a little obscure watering-place on the coast of Kent, and amusing himself by coquetting with a vulgar, low-bred girl, to the injury of an amiable youth, who was pursuing his studies at Oxford with additional zeal, in the hopes of his exertions—

extraordinary, nay, even miraculous as they were — being rewarded ultimately by the hand of a pure-minded, unsophisticated maiden."

Frederick Somers was told that—

"A serpent had crept into the family most dear to him, and was instilling its pernicious poison into the pure ears of one whom he loved, and who was, as the writer believed, worthy of his love. Leave then, deceived youth, the study of the classics and mathematics, and return to the spot where your treasure is in danger, and, by a manly and timely interference, rescue your love from the fangs of the before-alluded-to venemous reptile."

Frederick smiled as he put the note carefully into his pocket-book, and ordered his scout to pack up his clothes and a few books, for he was determined to quit Oxford immediately that term was over, which happened to be the very next day.

Daily consultations had been held between Miss Longiver—upon whom every body likely to get tickets for the ball had called—Captain

Cringer, and Miss Wilkinson, upon the mode to be adopted in provisioning the dancers. The giver of the ball simply suggested tea, and weak Marsala and Pontac negus. The captain was for sandwiches, and a little Roman punch, of which he was considered a skilful compounder. Wilkinson was all for a sit-down supper, commencing with white soups, and terminating with tartlets and jellies, illustrated with Port, Sherry, and Madeira.

Miss Longiver, after holding out a long time, at length, like a battered fortress, capitulated upon terms that the enemy should march in and plunder her stronghold of Twankay and Hyson, cakes, sandwiches, and hot negus, with punch in the close of the evening for the men.

The important night at length arrived, and Phœbe was quite delighted at seeing the one fly kept at the Royalty rattling up and down the one street of Tumberville, and setting down party after party of its gaily-dressed visitors; and as "the first floor's" carriage had set her, the giver of the ball, down at the door of the Assembly Rooms, she put on

her bonnet and shaw
meet the baker, and e
band, whose melodies
street through the o
crowded ball-room.

Just as she and her
had taken their statio
drew up, and deposited
vestibule of the room
Dangerous and the har
them, and crying out, "
be a row!" rushed acr
the amazed baker with

Miss Longiver had re
"She never danced, for
exercise," but sat, with
derrière, at the upper
M. C. clapped his hand
fifty couples in the ma
quadrilles. In the mi
a sharp, sudden scree
drowned the noise of
Every body stood st
ceased playing. Ami
Miss Longiver was he

shriek, "Captain Cringer, you have dared to invite those—those—whom, did I not abominate strong language, I should call most inadmissible people?"

Of course all eyes were directed to the inadmissibles. A handsome young man, with the well-known Kitty Dangerous leaning on his arm, and followed by Frederick Somers, his father and mother, and Mrs. Dangerous, walked up to the top of the room, and formed a group before the astonished eyes of every one.

"Allow me, my dear aunt, said Sir Edward, "to present you to my first cousin, and your niece, Miss Catherine Dangerous, and to her mamma, in whom you will recognise a sister. Had you not estranged yourself from your family by your talents for making yourself disagreeable, you would have known that of which you are now informed, for the first time, the second marriage of your younger sister in India, to this deserving young lady's father. This, madam, is Mr. Frederick Somers, her affianced husband, and my most intimate friend, who deputed me to convey to her the news of his having distinguished him-

self at college—and these are his excellent parents."

"Wilkinson, I shall faint—take me out."

"Before you go, aunt," said the baronet, "allow me to present to you—"

"I can't—I won't!" screamed Miss Longiver.

"A small packet of letters. The company may have printed copies of them at the door; and now I take my leave, merely adding that your theory of abominating strong language had better be reduced to practice as speedily as possible."

The inadmissibles made profound bows and courtesies, and left the room. Miss Longiver, pleading indisposition, retired from the room and the little watering-place that very night, taking with her the unwilling Wilkinson, who had not had time to enjoy even a solitary sandwich.

In a few short months, no such person was to be found in Tumberville or "the Old Place" as Kitty Dangerous.

CHAPTER XXI.

A GENTLEMAN MISSING.

In your zeal for the acquirement of accomplishments, do not lose sight of the solid and useful branches of education; above all things, do not neglect your *figures*.—EDGEWORTH *on Education*.

Mr. Gabriel Flame was a nobody, as far as family honours were concerned. His father was a very respectable oil and colourman, and had been in office; he had, in fact, been churchwarden, overseer, and high constable; the duties of which honourable but troublesome appointments he had discharged to his own satisfaction. He would often allude to his exertions in the cause of the parish of Bloomsbury, over his cups, in language which his hearers thought highly appropriate, although not strictly grammatical.

As a churchwarden, he had never neglected

the interests of his own church or his own comforts. When he had whitewashed, painted, and decorated the building under his charge, he did not forget to have the parish pew so comfortably stuffed, cushioned, and curtained, that he and his colleague could repose in it as comfortably as in their own easy chairs.

As an overseer, he was liberal in the dispensation of the parish money, and, as he was not of an inquisitive nature, he was a great favourite with the undeserving poor.

As a high-constable, he was in repute with the magistrates, because he gave them little or no trouble; in fact, he never interfered in any matters, unless he was compelled to do so by some troublesome fellow or another, and then he did it very reluctantly. His soul was in his trade and in his only child, Gabriel, whom, like a fond parent, he thought a glorious exception to the common herd of children—an opinion in which he was corroborated by his faithful spouse.

Was it probable or possible that he should think of bringing up "the handsomest and most genteelest young man in Bloomsbury"

to his own profession? Could he allow the taper fingers of his boy to be soiled with lampblack, white lead, red ochre, and brown umber? Could he permit him to go forth to some evening party, redolent of boiled linseed-oil or turps? No. He was what is called well to do in the world, and he resolved to make his son a gentleman and a scholar, so he sent him to a school at Hammersmith at £22 per annum, washing included. He had heard of the wise men of the East, but he preferred the accomplished gentleman of the West, and thought Hammersmith was the far west of gentility and good breeding.

Old Flame was not much out in his reckoning, for Gabriel left school at the age of nineteen, a most accomplished—coxcomb. He was as ignorant as a linendraper's shop-boy, and about as well dressed. His father, however, was delighted with him.

"There, sir," he would exclaim, as he was serving a customer, and saw his son pass the shop-window, "see that ere young man? My son—*my* son, sir—six feet of the elegantest bit of humanity in Bloomsbury. Natur

formed the material sich as you see it; edication has *primed* him, and laid on the two first coats; it only remains for high life to give him the finishing touch, and a prettier bit of work was never turned out of hand. His manners and learning stand out so clearly, that you'd fancy they'd been laid on with a pound brush."

His mother talked of nothing else but Gabriel to her maid of all work, and to her neighbours. She wound up the account of his virtues and graces by advising the "tip-top ladies to mind what they were about, or they would lose their hearts before they could say Jack Robinson, if they fell in company with her son."

As these remarks, and others of the same tendency, were made as freely in Gabriel's presence as they were in his absence, he thought his parents were possessed of an inordinate share of good sense and discrimination, and resolved not to disappoint their views and expectations. He would gain admittance into high life, and allow the tip-top ladies an

opportunity of losing their hearts by gazing on his face and figure.

As a preliminary step to his entrance into the walks of high life, Gabriel frequented the saloons of the theatres, and spent his nights in musical taverns, where he learnt to smoke cigars, sing amorous and sentimental songs, give toasts and sentiments, and absorb unlimited quantities of the most fashionable mixtures. He soon got acquainted with the public singers and recitators who "obliged the company" nightly, and, as he had plenty of money, and treated them very freely, they condescended to nod to him familiarly and cultivate his acquaintance; they even allowed him to command any particular song or recitation he pleased, without pleading a shocking cold, or incipient sore throat.

His next step was to procure an introduction to the gentlemen who knock one another about, and sometimes die in the ring, for the amusement of other people and their own aggrandizement. This he easily effected, by allowing his pockets to be picked at the Fives' Court, and finding out the public-houses kept



These two ad
gave him access
pied by "the l
the pedigree o
fingers'-ends, a
any body who
A few days at '
display of a red
him acquainted
spicuous legs,
forty or fifty
Leger to make
it was very che
trouble in gett
same parties w
him, and to tea
rouge-et-noir,
one of them to
man Gabriel

quently alluded—he joined a dancing society —a sort of capering club, that had been established by a celebrated master in the art of "the light fantastic," which met twice a week at a large room in the Strand. Here a mixed class, consisting of young men about town, and young ladies of undecided character, met to profit by the lessons of the professor, and, upon the singing for the million system, for mutual instruction.

Our hero's really handsome figure, and the rapid progress he made in quadrilling and waltzing, made him a very desirable partner; and though he could not boast of having won the heart of any of the ladies—for whose correctness of conduct, I ought to have observed, the professor made himself responsible—yet he never met with a refusal from the fairest—the *belle* of the ball—when he made her an offer—of an ice or a glass of negus.

Two years passed speedily in these improving and pleasing pursuits. The "old couple" were satisfied with the progress which their son was making in life. Gabriel had an unrestricted order to draw on the till for all his wants, and

unlimited credit with a fashionable tailor in Holborn—an old friend of his father. But—was not Gabriel happy? No. There was one serious drawback on his happiness. It was this:

Did he execute a song better than usual—did he give a toast remarkable for its novelty and significance—did he shake hands at "the corner" with the winner of the largest stake in the Derby—did he throw in seven mains running in Jermyn Street—did he execute a *pas seul* in the Strand to the openly-displayed admiration of the professor—the self-complacency resulting from his success was marred—marred by this interrogatory, and the reply,

"Who is he?—Oh! only young Gabe, the son of old Flame, the oilman."

This question, with its invariable and soul-sickening answer, had reached his ears one day just as he had been formally introduced to the jockey who was about to ride the supposed winner of the Oaks. He had not only shaken hands with him, but given him a peculiarly full-flavoured cigar, and claimed his

reward for the condescension of the first rider of his day, in the wondering glances of the assembled throng.

"Only young Gabe—the son of old Flame, the oilman," reached him just as the jockey, having lighted the cigar, pronounced it "a good un, and no mistake."

He turned away, and left the spot disgusted. He hurried home, and, as he turned out of Drury Lane into Holborn, he met his father, who, delighted to see his son, held out his hand most affectionately. Gabriel looked at him, thought of "old Flame, the oilman," and cut him dead.

The fond old man could not believe that the cut was intentional. He knew that to feign short-sightedness was then fashionable, and did not doubt that his son had merely pretended not to see him; but, when he arrived at home, he was unpleasantly convinced of his mistake; for he was told by the affectionate youth never to venture to speak to him in the streets again. Old Flame had a violent fit of the gout, took to his bed, and, in spite of all that medical skill

could do, allowed it to reach his stomach, and died.

Gabriel put on a fashionably-cut suit of mourning, and advertised the sale of the good-will of the business, the house, shop, and fixtures, on the same day. The shopman found the money, and married his mistress in less than two months. Gabriel was glad of it; he had a fair plea for closing the connexion; he invested the proceeds of the sale in the funds, and left Bloomsbury for ever—a rich and happy man.

You must imagine that some seven years have passed over Gabriel's head, when you meet him again. He has seen a great deal of life, abroad and at home, spent a great deal of money, and advanced some rounds up the ladder of society. He lives in chambers in the Albany, has a club, gives quiet dinners, and rides about town in a well-appointed *vis-à-vis*. He has the *entrée* of several third and fourth-rate fashionable families, and, as he is known to be rich still, is looked upon as a rather desirable *parti* by many speculatin

mothers and daughters. He has entirely dropped the ruffian, the swaggerer, and the vulgar dandy; dresses well, but quietly, and conducts himself on all occasions with a most rigid attention to what he considers the rules of high life. If he has one thing upon which he prides himself more than another, it is the smallness of his waist and the elegance of his figure, to preserve which he religiously abstains from all indulgence in eating and drinking, and takes regular exercise on horseback and with the foils. Such was our hero when I am about to reintroduce him to you.

"Flame, my dear fellow, your figure has positively made an impression upon Lady Arabella, my sister; she detests fat men, and calls me lumpy, though I only weigh fifteen stone five. Only do me a favour, and I will ensure your success in that quarter. She is a fine woman, a widow, with a comfortable dowry, and will make you a good wife—hundreds of men are dying for her, but you shall eclipse them all, if you will only oblige me in one little thing."

These words were spoken by a jovial country

baronet, Sir Jacob Crumpton, who was a great friend of Gabriel's, because he had borrowed £500 of him, and could not repay it. Gabriel had lent him the money, though he knew he should never be repaid, in order to ensure an introduction to Lady Arabella, upon whom, to use his own expression, "he was rather sweet."

It was the object of his life to marry a woman of title; and, although Sir Jacob's sister was only entitled to the prefix "lady" from the circumstance of her husband having been knighted, he was satisfied—especially as she was very handsome, tolerably rich, and much talked of by the men.

"My dear Sir Jacob," said Gabriel, "command my services. What can I do to oblige you?"

"Dine with me and Arabella at seven, and after dinner I will explain," said the baronet.

Gabriel readily consented, though he had a shrewd suspicion his account at his banker's would be diminished by it; and at seven found himself seated at his friend's table, with the object of, what he called, his affections.

Sir Jacob ate largely, and drank copiously.

Gabriel was as abstinent as a Roman Catholic in Lent; for which he was repaid by the kindly glances of the lady, and her pungent remarks on the detestability of fatness, and the propriety of preserving the figure, by avoiding gross feeding. She threw a favouring smile on the slim waist of Gabriel as he rose to open the drawing-room door for her, and he felt that his privations—for he had an appetite—were atoned for. If he could only preserve his figure, Lady Arabella was his own. He refused Sir Jacob's challenge to a second glass of claret, and only drank one because in it he drank the health of the fair widow.

Sir Jacob helped himself, and, before he had finished the bottle, explained to his friend that the business in which he required his assistance was this. He had been solicited by a borough near to his country-seat to come forward and represent it in the next parliament, which was expected to be called together in about three months. He was anxious to oblige the borough, for the gentleman who, as he thought, misrepresented it, was a per-

son who had opposed him at every county and magistrates' meeting, and had actually refused to present a petition on a subject in which his private interests were at stake, because the public might be injured by it if it were ordered to lie on the table.

He wanted no money, for he was to be supplied by the opposing party; but he wanted a friend who would aid him in attending free-and-easies, public-dinners, speech-making, and, as he termed it, "gammoning the constituency," and letting off squibs to annoy the adversary. If it should come to a duel, he should want a second, and Gabriel was *au fait* at "the barkers."

Gabriel agreed. The season in London was nearly over, and he thought he might as well spend two or three months in the country at the baronet's expense, as at some watering-place at his own. He thought, too, that he should have an opportunity — many opportunities—of pleading his cause with Lady Arabella; but in this he was disappointed.

Her ladyship hated electioneering, and held the constituency of Lowburgh in great con-

tempt, so she made up her mind to pass the autumn abroad. Gabriel and the baronet saw her and her maid safely on board the Batavier. The lover felt satisfied with the kindness displayed in her farewell, and was convinced that she gazed admiringly on his slender figure, as he stepped into the boat which conveyed him to the shore.

When they arrived at the Grange, as the baronet's seat was called, a deputation of the voters of Lowburgh waited upon the future candidate for their suffrages. They came to settle the plan of operations on which they were to act. Of course, they were invited to stay and dine, and, more of course, they accepted the invitation, for they had come on purpose.

Gabriel was introduced to them in due form, and every one of them—a round dozen—asked him to take wine with him at dinner, which he did not venture to refuse for fear of losing his friend a vote. After dinner, the plans were laid down and approved of. The principal agent—an attorney, who had never earned even six shillings and eightpence of

the sitting member—suggested that Mr. Gabriel Flame should throw open all the public-houses in the baronet's interest, and invite the voters to eat and drink at his expense, and ask the baronet and the committee to meet them. There could be no bribery by treating, in that, for Mr. Gabriel Flame was not going to stand for the borough, and had a right to entertain whom he pleased.

Gabriel consented, and his health was drunk with nine times nine, and one cheer more. The baronet's health was also drunk, and then the gentlemen of the committee, collectively and individually—all in bumpers and upstanding.

A considerable quantity of wine was consumed over this; and then the baronet, who knew the men with whom he had to deal, ordered broiled bones, devilled kidneys, and other grills, which gave a zest to the punch that followed. Gabriel was compelled to drink, whether he wished to do so or not. He went to bed in a state closely bordering on inebriety, and rose in the morning with a shocking bad headache.

He had no time, however, to think of his sufferings, for the deputation came over to the Grange to breakfast, and, as every member of it was suffering from the effects of the overnight's excesses, "French cream" was put into every man's tea by the baronet, and several large jugs of very potent ale were placed on the table. The deputation loved ale and drank freely. They insisted on Gabriel's following their example. Gabriel hated ale, but he drank it for fear of offending the voters if he refused.

After breakfast, the baronet followed the deputation to Lowburgh in an open landau, with his friend seated by his side. They were greeted by loud cheers from the party in his interest, who afterwards came to the assembly-rooms at the principal inn, to hear the candidate explain his political views.

This he did briefly and rather indistinctly, and introduced his friend Mr. Gabriel Flame to them. Gabriel's name was received with unbounded applause—for it had been buzzed about that he was a liberal man, and would stand treat to any amount. This rumour

was confirmed, when the voters were invited to meet him that very evening, in that very room, to enjoy his society, and a cheerful glass of anything they pleased to call for.

As a preparation for the evening's amusement, the baronet and the deputation invited Mr. Gabriel Flame to dine at the inn. The scene of the day before was acted over again; and, when the large party assembled in the evening, no feeling of shiness existed in the breasts of any of the dinner-party. They were prepared to make themselves agreeable in any way the voters pleased: and, as they pleased to smoke clay pipes of very strong tobacco, and drink strong punch, the deputation, the candidate, and his friend, joined them in the amusement. Gabriel, poor fellow, was very ill, and was put to bed by the butler at the Grange.

For more than a month, Gabriel was involved in this same sort of life. He was obliged to breakfast here, lunch there, take sundry glasses of ale with this man, and wine with that. He sat down daily to a dinner party, and wound up the evening at a punch

party, after a supper of tripe and onions, or some other fragrant dish.

Still Gabriel was well. He had got seasoned to it, and was kept in such a state of constant excitement, that he had no time to think of anything—but securing votes and voters—not even to think of his Arabella.

Gabriel, to ensure a vote, had, on his arrival at Lowburgh, ordered two suits of clothes of an influential tailor. They fitted him too much—that is, there was more broadcloth in them than he had been accustomed to—but use reconciled him to them, and they seemed daily to fit him more closely.

It was resolved, to ensure success, that he should give a ball to the ladies of the borough. Tickets were issued, and, on the night of the ball, Gabriel determined to risk offending the voting tailor, by appearing to the ladies in his crack London "evening costume." He went up to dress after a copious dinner, and was surprised to find that his London clothes fitted him too little—he could not button them. A fear—a dread of something horrible came over him—a cold sweat seemed to issue from

every pore of his body—he made an energetic attempt to make his buttons meet the button-holes, but they gave way in the attempt.

Gabriel groaned, and stood tremblingly, viewing himself in a large looking-glass, and, after a careful survey of his reflected figure, fell fainting in a chair, from the conviction that he had *grown fat*. Yes; his throat was no longer a taper Byronial throat, but supported a second chin—a wad of *fat*. His waist was no longer discernible as a waist—it was part and parcel of a large middle of *fat*. Gabriel jumped into bed, and resolved to lie there and die. He never would be seen again.

"Oh, Arabella!" cried he, bursting into tears, "you will hate me, for I am a *fat man*."

He was roused from his despondency by the boronet, who laughed at his sad plight, and told him that he could easily restore his figure, by going into training as soon as the election was over. Gabriel was sure he could; so he got up and went to the ball in one of his borough suits, and made up his mind to

ensure his friend's return, and then undergo a course of gymnastics and sudorifics, to ensure the restoration of his pristine figure before the return of the Lady Arabella.

Another two months passed. Gabriel extended daily; even the borough suits sat too tightly upon him. He ordered an enlarged edition; but, even then, in less than a fortnight, he was convinced that the cloth shrunk. However, never mind — the election was to come off in a week—it did come off—the baronet was returned. Gabriel received the thanks of his friend, and a check from the deputation to cover all his expenses. He stopped for the chairing and the election dinner, and left for London, literally *twice the man he was.*

Gabriel arrived at his chambers. He knocked at his door. The housekeeper opened it, and started back in amaze.

"Bless us and save us! how *fat* you've got, sir!"

Gabriel made no reply, but went to bed, and sent for Mr. Jackson, the professor of private pugilism. He revealed to him the

secret that preyed on his mind, and asked his advice as to how he was to reduce himself. A plan was laid down, that was recommended by Captain Barclay, which, though severe, had been proved to be efficacious.

Gabriel went down to Hurley Bottom, on the Henley road, and put himself under the care of the landlord of the little inn there, who had superintended the training of many an obese fighting-man. He rose at five, walked and ran till nine; ate one underdone beefsteak, with a small glass of porter, for breakfast; walked till two; dined off another steak, with one glass of port wine; walked again till eight; set-to with the landlord for an hour in a flannel dress; had another small steak, and one glass of porter, and went to bed between the blankets.

He persevered for a week, and fancied, like Mr. Matthews's Welsh gentleman, that he was "a little thinner." But the intense thirst caused by the severe exercise and the scanty supply of fluids was too much for him. He watched his trainer out of sight, and took a whole quart of porter off at a draught, and so

delicious was it, that he repeated the dose whenever he had an opportunity. At a month's end, he was as *fat* as ever.

He left Hurley Bottom, and returned to London, where he consulted a physician, who put him on low diet and a course of sudorifics. He got weaker, but no thinner. He next tried Mahomet's baths at Brighton, but he got rater *fatter* upon them, as he was so hungry and thirsty after their use, that he could not refrain from eating and drinking largely.

What was to be done? He left the appetite-giving air of the sea, and went to town again to consult Abernethy, who told him to "read his [Mr. A.'s] book, live upon sixpence a day, and earn it." Gabriel read the book, but he could not earn sixpence a day, so it was of no use to try to live upon it.

As he sat in his chambers in gloomy despair, convinced that the *sum* of all his efforts was to be addition instead of reduction, he was startled by a loud knock. The door opened, and in walked his friend Sir Jacob Crumpton and his sister the Lady Arabella.

Gabriel could not rise from the sofa on

which he was reclining. He felt that h
should stand confessed a *fat man*, if he did-
so he pleaded illness, threw his dressing-gow
over his middle, and received the thanks
her ladyship for his exertions in her brother
behalf in a recumbent position.

Lady Arabella saw at a glance that he wa
an altered man, and suspected the reason
his recumbency. She maliciously felt sud
denly faint, and requested a little eau de Co
logne. Gabriel sprung up to fetch it fro
his bedroom—her ladyship received it, an
sighed as she said,

"Heavens! what a size!"

"Yes," said the jolly baronet, "the air
the Grange has made a man of him. He
one of *us*."

Gabriel only groaned. The interview wa
cut short by the lady who, really pitying th
feelings of the fat man, displayed in his lugu
brious looks, pleaded an engagement, an
rose to take her leave. Gabriel took he
extended hand, placed it on the six inche
of solid flesh that covered his ribs, an
whispered,

"Oh! Lady Arabella, if ever I do get thin again, may I call this mine?"

A gentle pressure of the taper fingers was all the reply—but it was enough. Gabriel was determined to reduce himself, or leave England for ever.

On the following morning Gabriel was missing. His housekeeper was alarmed. His bed had not been slept in, and all his clothes, but those he was wearing, were there. Still she said nothing to any one. He might intend to send for his trunk; but day followed day, night succeeded night, and her master neither appeared nor wrote for his luggage. She went to Sir Jacob and his sister, and told them of her fears for her master's safety. Lady Arabella was nervous about him, but the baronet laughed, and said he had no doubt he was gone into training again.

Still, when the housekeeper had explained that he had disappeared without even a change of linen, and had left all his training flannel-clothing behind him, he began to be fidgety, and finally, at his sister's suggestion, went to a police-office and communicated the dis-

appearance of his friend to the magistrate, who ordered one of the cleverest policemen to render all the assistance in his power in discovering the whereabouts of Mr. Gabriel Flame.

Z., No. 450, asked a great many questions of the housekeeper. He examined Flame's razor-case, and inquired for his pistols—drank a bottle of sherry, as he thought deeply, and then said, "Drowned his-self." The Serpentine was dragged, but only one body was hooked up, and that a poor, thin, scraggy pauper, who had drowned himself because he could not get fat.

The watermen at the respective bridges were questioned, but no one but some unfortunate women had overleapt the bounds of propriety or the balustrades of the bridges for more than a footnight. Inquiries at the Docks, the Seven Ponds at Hampstead, the New River Head, and the Grand Junction Canal, were all equally unsatisfactory. No *fat* suicides had been seen watching for an opportunity to drown themselves and their sorrows.

"Advertise him as a GENTLEMAN MISSING,' said Z. No. 450.

The baronet did in all the London papers; and the description given of his personal appearance would greatly have disgusted Mr. Flame, had he, poor man! seen it—it conveyed such a gross notion of obesity. No reply was received for some days. Lady Arabella was in despair—the baronet quite beaten by circumstances over which he had no control. He had serious thoughts of putting on mourning at once. He was about to order a suit, when the postman brought a dirty document, sealed with a bit of bread-crumb, which ran thus:

"Brixton, Cat and Cauliflour In.

"Sur,

"Have sin your notus of missin Gent. I nos un, an if so be you'll giv me the mitten at the in abuv and promis not to split on me, will giv you all informashun in pour as chepe as possibul.

"Yr. obt. st.,

"BILL GABBINS."

The baronet, at Lady Arabella's suggestion, hurried off to Brixton, and found a short, thick-set man at the "Cat and Cauliflower," who responded to the name of Gabbins. He gave a very knowing wink, and preceded Sir Jacob into a snug parlour, where, when he locked the door, he said,

"What 'ill you stand?"

"Ten sovereigns," said the baronet.

"Make it fifteen, and I'll make you fly," said Gabbins.

The fifteen sovereigns were paid, and Mr. William Gabbins, popping his finger to the side of a very red nose, said,

"*He's on the wheel!*"

This needed explanation, but it was so speedily given, that the baronet found himself in the Brixton House of Correction with Mr. Gabbins, who was one of the under-turnkeys, in a very few minutes. He was shown into the merry-go-round, and there, sure enough, on the wheel was his friend Gabriel doing the work of two men, and almost reduced to his natural figure. His hair was close-cropped, but he looked well and happy.

"Hurrah!" he cried, when he saw Sir Jacob, "this is your only training-ground—look at my waist! you can almost span it. Give my love to your sister, and say I shall be out in a fortnight. Good-by—I must keep moving, or I shall sprain my ankle."

The baronet saw through the affair in a moment, and returned home quite happy. Gabriel Flame came out, restored to his former elegant shape, and Lady Arabella kept her promise—her *implied* promise of becoming Mrs. Flame, if her "future" could reduce himself to his natural size.

MORAL.

All you overgrown gentlemen, who cannot keep your figures within bounds, put on a disguise, break a shop-window, refuse to give your name, get committed for a month to Brixton, and advertised for as "A Gentleman Missing." *Probatum est.*

CHAPTER XXII.

FINISHING WITH A DINNER.

Un malheur ne vient jamais seul.
OLD PROVERB.

In a retired village, some eighty miles from London, on the great northern road, lived one Raymond Fowler. In the immediate sphere of his duties his name was never heard. He was called simply "the Doctor," and when any body within sixteen miles of Sowerberry spoke of the doctor, every one knew that Raymond Fowler was the individual alluded to. He had, strictly speaking, a very *extensive* practice, although it could not be called a *very* profitable one; for what he earned by what he was pleased to denominate pharmas*hu*ticals was sadly lessened by the wear and tear of vehicles and horse-flesh. He was the only medical man within twenty miles of Sowerberry, and the circuit within which his practice lay was a tract of hilly country, much of it uncultivated, and

dotted here and there with a farm-house, a church and parsonage, and a few labourers' cottages. The roads were mere nominal roads; they were only a series of cart-ruts, either over ploughed fields or over the downs, where, in order to assist travellers on dark nights, they were marked out by little heaps of chalk placed about twenty feet from each other on the green-sward. In summer time, his *iters*, as he always classically spoke of his journeys, were pleasant enough, but in winter it was almost impracticable to go from farm to farm on wheels, for the soil in the cultivated regions was a deep clay of so tenacious a character, that, if a vehicle of any sort was once firmly fixed in it, the only chance the driver had of extricating it was to take the horse out and ride off across country to the nearest farm, and beg the loan of a powerful team and a skilful waggoner.

From long practice, Mr. Raymond Fowler knew the very day on which it was necessary for him to lay up his headed buggy for the winter. The harness was well cleaned and oiled, and put up in a dry cupboard about

the beginning of November, and, when he had rubbed the harness, the doctor's servant rubbed his hands and smiled to think that that part of his duties was over until the March winds had hardened the surface of the country. The buggy—and such a buggy! its fashion would have thrown Long Acre into fits of laughter — was carefully cleaned and covered up, the coach-house locked to prevent the fowls roosting on its leather head and splash-board, and the key deposited in a place of safety. When that door was unlocked again, and the buggy made its appearance, it was a signal to all the farmers to get their seed-barley ready; for they knew that the land was in a fit and proper state to receive it. When the buggy disappeared, and the coach-house door was locked again, woe be to that farmer who had not ploughed his land and sown his wheats! he smoked a most melancholy pipe, for he knew that all further attempts to get upon the lands would be useless. Thus the doctor's buggy was regarded in the neighbourhood of Sowerberry as an agricultural barometer.

The figure of the doctor, although not handsome or symmetrical, was fortunately admirably suited to the saddle. The weight was all above the horse, for when Mr. Fowler stood up he appeared to be about the average height of his species, and when he sat down he seemed to lose about two feet by so doing, his legs were so very long, and his back so very short. They—his legs—moreover, were bowed, and seemed made to fit the saddle-flaps, and the Crispin of Sowerberry had been obliged to have a pair of boot-trees made on purpose for his medical customer. These long legs were as remarkably thin as his arms and shoulders were thick and stout, and his head was remarkably large and thick too. He was a very queer-looking man, and dressed himself in the garb of a respectable farmer of the day.

Mr. Raymond Fowler always rode a good horse. He was a judge of horseflesh, and bought every young horse that pleased his eyes, for it was a profitable plan to him. He broke them and rode them in his business, and when they were perfect he found a means of

falling in with the hounds in the course o
iters, and as he was an excellent rider he
led the field, and was always in at the d
—of Charley, I mean, not of his patien
when they, his patients, were on the poi
being run into by the King of Terrors
called in the parson, and never went near
house again until his services were needed
some other branch of the family.

When the doctor appeared in the fie
grand struggle took place among the ge
men who wanted a hunter. They fo
hounds and fox too, and chased the doc
The man who got up first shouted out " H
much ?" "Eighty guineas," was the answ
" He's mine," closed the deal, for the do
never asked more or less than he meant
take.

As Mr. Raymond Fowler generally
two or three young horses every season,
the buyers of them assigned them names a
sive to the profession of the seller, the So
berry hunt contained an odd assortment
horse-titles. There was the Bay Doctor,
Black Doctor, the Gray Doctor, and, in sh

doctors of every hue. There was Gallipots, Galens, Pill-boxes, Pestles, Mortars, Ointments, Plaisters, Blisters, Apoplexies, Epilepsies, Catalepsies, and many others which the reader's imagination will readily supply. The most famous of all of them was Squire Sowerberry-of-Sowerberry's Squirt. He had called him Syringe, as being more elegant, but his groom, who had been under-gardener, assured him that that was the name of a *tree* —the syringa being the nearest approach to syringe that he had ever heard—so his name was changed to Squirt, and he did not disgrace his name, for he went off as quick as a jet of water out of that little instrument, and kept it up to the end of the burst.

Mr. Raymond Fowler occupied the Vicarage House of Sowerberry. The vicar was non-resident, under the plea of the house being out of repair. This was not a false plea, for it was in such a condition that few men would have ventured to inhabit it but the doctor. He would not have done so had it not been in the very centre of the hunt and his practice, and, moreover, stood in the midst of some

rich pastures, admirably suited for grazing young horses.

At the time when the little incident happened which I am about to relate, Mr. Raymond Fowler was about fifty-five years of age, hale and hearty, and in prosperous circumstances, for he was very closefisted, and never indulged in any thing but his own excellent strong beer—which he said was the best thing to work upon,—except at the expense of some one or other of his numerous patients. He was married to an industrious woman, the daughter of a neighbouring farmer, and had had a numerous family, but all of them had been taken from him save one—the youngest girl.

His establishment consisted of a drudge in female attire, who looked more like a man in disguise than a woman, from her enormous size, and a peculiarly redundant crop of hair which grew upon her chin and upper lip. She had lived many years with the family, and kept her master and mistress a little *in terrorem*. She did all the work that her mistress could not do, and that John, the groom and gardener, would not do. The

only addition to these two individuals, who, I ought to mention it, quarrelled daily, and had quarrelled daily for many years, and were likely to continue quarrelling daily as long as they lived together, was the apprentice, or rather the succession of apprentices; for somehow or another Mr. Raymond Fowler's "young men" seldom stayed one twelvemonth with him. Whether it was that Mrs. Fowler interfered too much in the dispensing part of the business, and insisted on cheap substitutes being used instead of the dearer articles prescribed by her husband on some very momentous occasions, or that the accommodations and supplies were not deemed equivalent to the premium paid and to the youth's expectations, I cannot say; I can only mention the fact that, before the expiration of a year, Mr. Raymond Fowler had to refund part of the premium, or stand a lawsuit, (which he was too wise to do, after the first time, when he was *cast*, as the phrase is) and to advertise for another pupil; or, for I believe in those days the name was not deemed so vulgar as it is now—an apprentice.

Mr. Raymond Fowler was not a clever man, by any means; indeed, he was but one degree above a cow-leech or horse-doctor. The little he knew of his profession he knew practically. He despised theory; and as to all modern improvements, he scorned them as innovations set on foot by assuming *ignorami*, as he called them. He knew nothing of the classics, although, when he did talk, which was but seldom, for he had a trick of nodding or shaking his head, smiling or looking melancholy, which he thought excellent substitutes for spoken opinions on doubtful cases—I say, when he did talk, he tried to talk classically. How far his knowledge of Latin went may be judged of by this little fact. He one day received a note from a neighbouring parson, who apologized for any errors it might contain, upon the common plea of its having been written *currente calamo*.

"Order the horse, my dear; Parson Spinks has hurt himself," cried the Doctor.

"How? what do you mean?" inquired Mrs Fowler.

"Why, can't you see? Oh! I forget you

don't know Latin. You see *currente calamo?* Well, that means that he has met with a calamity, that is, an accident, in running."

The reader will arrive at a juster estimate of the habits and opinions of Mr. Raymond Fowler from the following little dialogue than from any further description that I could give of him.

As he sat over a late breakfast with his wife, for he had but just been released from attendance on a lady anti-Malthusianly given, Phœbe, the drudge, entered, and tossed a letter on the table in a very rude manner. Her temper had been soured by the unwillingness of the butter *to come* after she had been *churming* for some three hours.

"There's a letter, and it's one-and-eight."

"One-and-eight—what, twenty-pence? I won't take it in," said the Doctor. "If I do, may—"

"Very well; it's no consarn of mine," said Phœbe, snatching it out of his hand. "I'll give it posty again, and I hope it contains money, that's all."

"Stop, Phœbe, stop; Raymond, my dear, don't risk any loss for twenty-pence. What's the post-mark, Phœbe?" cried Mrs. Fowler.

"How can I tell as haven't opened the letter, and can't read. I'll go and ask posty," said Phœbe.

"It comes from Lunnun, and has got summut inside of it, he says, and that makes it double what it would have been."

Mr. Raymond Fowler took the letter, felt it carefully all over, squeezed the sides open, and endeavoured to peep into it. He could see nothing but what seemed to be a little note in a large cover. He examined the superscription, in hopes that the character of the writing might enable him to guess at the writer. The attempt was a failure. While he sat doubting whether he should take it in or not, her mistress had quietly given Phœbe one shilling and eightpence, and posty, as she called him, was already dismissed.

"Open it, my dear; that is the shortest way of discovering its contents."

"What! and have to pay twenty pence for what is perhaps only the latest price of

drugs, and a solicitation for an order? Preposterous!"

"It is paid for, and therefore you had better open it."

"Mrs. F., Mrs. F., do you think I am suffering from a pecuniary plethora?"

"Open the letter, Mr. F., or give it to me."

The Doctor put the letter under his plate and shook his head negatively. When he had finished his rasher and drank his tea, which he did very deliberately, in order, I am sorry to say it, to provoke his wife, he took the letter from under his plate, put on his spectacles, and wasted some ten minutes in inspecting the wafer, the post-mark, and the direction, over which was written "private and confidential."

"Very odd indeed; who can have any thing private and confidential to say to me?"

"Open the—"

"An incurable, perhaps, who has been improperly treated by the Londoners, and has heard of my fame."

"Don't be a donkey," said Phœbe, as she removed the breakfast things; "it's more likely a man wants a horse physicked."

"*Do* open the—," said Mrs. F.

"Young woman—Phœbe, I mean, not you, Mrs. F.—if you allow your irritability of temper to overpower your cerebral functions, you will come to an untimely death," said the Doctor, gravely.

"Stuff! Mr. F." said the wife.

"Ay, doctor's stuff—heugh!" said Phœbe, shuddering as if she had taken a senna draught, and had nothing to drive the taste away.

"When the delicate nerves of the cinciput and occiput are—" began the master, intending to read Phœbe a clever lecture.

"I dont believe a word about it," said the maid, tucking the table-cloth under her arm, and walking off with the breakfast cups and saucers. "You may gammon them as don't know you, but you can't gammon me as knows you so well."

"I'll discharge that girl, Mrs. F.; she is

as impudent as she is tall. Six feet of sheer rudeness."

"Do open the letter, and never mind Phœbe; it's only owing to the cream."

Mr. Raymond Fowler still kept his wife in suspense by giving her a long detail of all the offences that Phœbe had committed during the period of her service in the family, and would have prolonged the trial of her patience, had she not quietly made sham preparations for leaving the room.

"Do not leave me, Mrs. F., until you have heard the result of this private and confidential communication."

"I must really go and see if the butter is come," replied the lady; "and, as to the contents of the letter, you can let me know them to-night or to-morrow morning."

"I insist upon your hearing them *now*, Mrs. F.; remember your marriage vow."

"As you please, Mr. F."

"Then sit down, madam, and don't make me fancy you are anxious to elope."

Mrs. F. sat down, and Mr. F. opened the

letter, but not before he had begged the loan of his wife's scissors, in order that he might not destroy any portion of the writing in getting at the interior.

He so seldom received a letter, that such an article as an envelope was unknown to him, so that, when he had removed the outer cover and found all blank, he was bewildered.

"Sad waste of half a sheet of Bath post," said he.

"Open the enclosure, my love."

Raymond obeyed, and fully expected to see some equivalent for his twenty pence within its folds. The enclosure was merely a note from a lawyer, the adviser of Squire Sowerberry of Sowerberry, who had been under the painful necessity of summoning a rich aunt, to whom he was heir-at-law, before a jury to determine whether she was sane or not sane, *compos vel non-compos*. He had heard from the country lawyer that she had made a will, bequeathing sundry large sums to a chapel of which she had recently become a member.

The inquiry *de lunatico* had been held in London, at the Gray's Inn coffee-house, and Mr. Raymond Fowler had attended at that excellent hotel as a most important witness, inasmuch as he had been the medical adviser of old Madame Sowerberry for many years. His evidence was of the greatest service to the heir-at-law, as it fully proved, to the satisfaction of the jury, that Madame Sowerberry had been totally incapacitated from managing her own affairs for at least three years before the period of making her extraordinary will. What could make it clearer that she was *non compos mentis* at that time, than the fact that she had refused to give the doctor a reasonable sum, say fifty pounds, for a horse to draw her carriage, for which young Squire Sowerberry gave eighty *guineas* within three days of the time she had refused to take it off her doctor's hands at the first-mentioned low figure?

The commissioner congratulated Mr. Raymond Fowler on the clear and conclusive manner in which he had given his evidence;

and that gentleman, having no one at home to wait upon his patients, as soon as his examination and cross-examination were over, got upon the York mail and went back again to Sowerberry, leaving the London mad-doctors to fight out the battle of sanity or insanity according to their respective theories. He had received the amount of his expenses, and a trifling remuneration for the loss of time, from Messrs. Chance and Nogo, his Squire's solicitors, and had fondly thought the business ended.

The contents of the twenty-penny-worth of letter were these;

"Staples Inn, June 7th.

"Dear Sir,

"The inquiry into the state of mind of Mrs. Priscilla Sowerberry is at length satisfactorily concluded. We mean to finish off with a dinner, and as your evidence was, in the last degree, most valuable in saving so large a sum of money from the hands of the Jumpers and Shakers, Mr. Sowerberry, of

Sowerberry, begs you will favour us with your company upon this most interesting occasion. The old lady is shut up.

" We have the honour to be,

" Your obedient humble servants,

(For Messrs. Chance and Nogo),

" SIMEON FLURRY.

" P.S. We have authority for saying that your expenses will be paid, and your loss of time duly remunerated. Dinner at the Gray's Inn coffee-house on the 12th at six—*military time.*"

" Of course you will go, Raymond—you must not disoblige the Squire," said Mrs. F.; " your expenses are to be paid, and you will be amply remunerated for your—"

" Amply, Mrs. F.—what *do* you mean by amply? Can Messrs. Chance and Nogo calculate on what I may earn in a day?—no. And then my patients—can I leave them to the mercy of your dispensations—I mean dispensings, and my apprentice's advice? I have a most awfully responsible duty to perform—I—I—should like to dine with the Squire,

but duty—duty—Mrs. F., you know what the great Lord Nelson used to say on that subject—' England expects—' "

" He was not a country apothecary, and, if I was you, I would go. And, as to duty, ain't it summer, and no one ailing? Why, you have only a few children in the scarlets; measles and hoopings are over, and no births expected. As to coughs, gout, and rheumatism, I can handle them as well as you; and if any thing in the accident way should occur, you can't be expected to be in the way to provide for it—go, by all means. You have not seen much of London; go and enjoy yourself and—bring back a good stock of grocery—it will save carriage."

Mr. Raymond Fowler was delighted at the view which his wife had taken of the affair, but he would not own it. He pulled out a long, narrow-shaped pocket-book, and pretended to examine it closely.

" Well, my dear, what important cases do you expect?"

" None, Mrs. F., none—I am happy to say the country is healthy."

"There's one, and that's a whopper, shortly," said Phœbe, who had been quietly listening to all that had passed.

"Young woman—(Phœbe was fifty-four)—young woman, I *must* discharge you."

"There's Gideon Giles's wife like to be down with her seventeenth in the course of a week."

"True, too true—prodigious are the puerperal powers of that poor creature!" sighed and said the doctor.

"The what?—how you do abuse your best customers!"

"Never mind, Phœbe, retire—and put up two shirts, two pair of socks, and everything necessary for your master for a week's absence; Old Rachel Tims can wait on Gideon's wife, if her time arrives before your master."

"Sooner than that intruder into regular practice should dare to attend one of my patients, I would stay in Sowerberry and offend fourteen Squire Sowerberrys, and you, madam, and you, Phœbe—I will *not* go to London," stormed the doctor.

"Don't be a donkey," said Phœbe.

"Put up the things," said the mistress.

Mr. Raymond Fowler swore heartily at both of them, mounted a fine young colt, and set out upon his rounds to tell every one that he was going to town to dine with Squire Sowerberry, of Sowerberry, who had been fortunate enough, through his important evidence, to put his aunt into a madhouse for the rest of her life.

While the doctor is travelling up to town on the box-seat of the York mail, it may be as well to explain to the reader the motives which induced his wife to urge him to accept the invitation to what Phœbe called the mad dinner.

Independently of wishing to obtain a large parcel of groceries, carriage free, she was most anxious that no offence should be given to the Squire on her daughter's account. Miss Henrietta was rather a pretty young woman, and Mr. Sowerberry, of Sowerberry, whenever he called on the doctor to see his colts, or to pay his respects to the family, was rather fond of chatting and laughing with his daughter. He sometimes prolonged

his visits beyond the half hour usually devoted to a call, and the young lady fondly imagined it was for the sake of her agreeable conversation, while, in reality, it was for the sake of her papa's admirable strong beer, of which the Squire was very fond.

The mother, like a fool as she was, construed these little chit-chats over the ale-glass into serious attentions, and entertained not the slightest doubt but that, if her husband played his cards well, Miss Henrietta Fowler would become Squiress Sowerberry, of Sowerberry. She did not make known her ill-grounded hopes and expectations to the doctor, for fear he should, by his very significant head-noddings and shakings, give the Squire a premature hint of them, and so drive him from the trap before he had entered it far enough to be fairly caught.

Mr. Raymond Fowler had no such thoughts. When he accepted the invitation, it was in hopes that he should have an excellent dinner, plenty of wine, and an agreeable week's lionizing in London at another person's expense.



expense of the
and the Jumper
say, the evening
deal of wine
the gentlemen,
and sung the l
wisely retired
Simeon Flurry,
Chance and Nog
of the table; a
the bottle witho
well-seasoned ve
night, they fou
last bottle by th
paratively speak
three glasses of

"Well, docto
must admit. C
ther bottle?—n

comfortable. I shall go to the Saracen's Head, and indulge a little inclination which I feel to somnolency."

"Pooh! pooh! go to bed at this early hour—never heard of a man who came up to London to see life, going to bed before

Daylight did appear.

Let me see—eleven o'clock—too late for the play—where can we go?—what can we do? Waiter, what sort of an evening is it?"

"Uncommon lovely evening, sir," said the waiter.

"Then, by Jove, we will go to Vauxhall!"

Mr. Raymond shook his head and looked gravely, but said nothing until the waiter had left the room. He then, in a hesitating manner, and in a low whisper, inquired what the expense would be, adding, by way of apology for asking the question, that he had only put enough money in his pocket to pay his fare up, relying for a supply on the promise contained in Mr. Flurry's twenty-penny letter.

"Expense!—curse the expense!—it all goes down in the costs *de lunatico*. We will go and drink Madame Priscilla's health, during



but he still he
he should not
the addenda c
"Well, wh
works, and M
—she goes up
"I really s
I have no mo
slowly and de
"Oh, I'll
thing," said
trousers'-pock
"But we m
you know, an
or other migh
"Well, we
Sowerberry h
as you are co
want to cover

"Twenty pounds—will that do? or say thirty pounds, if you like. We wish to do the handsome thing by so important a witness," said Mr. Flurry.

"I should *think* thirty pounds will cover everything—a medical man's time is very valuable," said the doctor, musingly, but with an inward chuckle.

"Well, I'll write you a cheque at once, and the landlord will change it for you; but, if you will take my advice, you will only take a sovereign or two in your pocket, and leave the rest in his hands until to-morrow morning. There are such things as dishonest people even at Vauxhall."

The cheque was taken, but not the advice. The doctor intimated with a knowing nod that he had a pocket inside his waistcoat, and should keep a sharp look-out. So, when the change was brought, he put five sovereigns into his breeches'-pocket, and five five-pound notes into a pocket-book, in which Mr. Flurry *fancied* he saw several more—but that was no business of his.

"Now I'm at your service," said the doctor,



A coach
additional s
Mr. Jarvey
deposit his
in somethir
seemed but
" They had
Flurry said.
The doeto
borrowing t
admission t
the plea of h
suspicious.
discharged
entered the
nished with
view. He s
the orchest

sweet sounds, and he was enraptured. His enthusiasm was excited to such a pitch, that, when the song was over, he joined in the shout for a repetition of it, in such a stentorian voice, that he drew the attention of the whole assembly upon him, which was no way diminished by his queer dress, for he was in his top-boots, drabs, and long-flapped coat, and, to crown all, a very *rummy* hat, as his companion called it.

"Bravo, doctor! we must have 'that strain again,' so shout away," said Simeon.

"Brayvoh — anchore, anchore," screamed Fowler.

"Go it, my country kiddy."

"That's the sort, my tidy rural."

These words of encouragement and approbation proceeded from the mouths of two vulgar little puppies, and such was the excitement under which the doctor was labouring, that he turned round and hit the nearest of them very hard upon the nose.

The little fellow, instead of putting up with the affront, threw himself into a splendid attitude, and popped in one, two, right and

left, much to the doctor's surprise, who was a very strong man and reckoned a good boxer—in the country.

The affair had taken place so suddenly that Mr. Flurry could not interfere before two or three blows had been exchanged. He threw himself between the combatants, and shouted for an officer. Before one could arrive at the spot, the doctor had nearly got to his antagonist again, and was trying with all his might to strike him. Flurry, however held tightly on to his arm, and told him not to be a fool.

"Go it, little one — now, countryman, at him again—a ring, a ring!" shouted the ill disposed part of the crowd.

"Shame, shame! — turn them both out," cried those who were more peaceably inclined.

A rush took place, and the doctor found himself separated from his foe, and hurried off between two constables. He was taken into a little room, where his antagonist soon followed him. A gentleman, dressed in black, with a handsome cane in his hand

politely listened to the statements of each party, and, bowing, assured the doctor that he was in the wrong, and that he must either satisfy his adversary, or quit the gardens immediately.

"I know him," whispered Mr. Flurry; "give him a sovereign to say no more about it."

The doctor hesitated for a minute—he could not bear to part with twenty shillings, but the thoughts of being compelled to quit the scene of enchantment overcame his reluctance, and he put a sovereign into his opponent's hand, who tossed it up, caught it again, and told Mr. Fowler that "he was a gentleman, and had behaved as sich." The gentleman in black bowed to each with his hand on his breast, and led the way back to the gardens.

"You have narrowly escaped a severe punishment, my dear sir," said Flurry, gravely; "five minutes more, and your wife would not have known you."

"What, from that little chap? I just wish —"

"No, you won't, when I tell you that the

little fellow is a great prize-fighter. His name is Brown, and he is known as the 'Sprig of Myrtle' among the fancy."

The doctor was rather astonished, but still felt an inclination to renew the battle. His thoughts were soon diverted from the subject by seeing himself the observed of all observers; and a remark from an excessively gay-dressed man, "Twig him, Bill; that's the covey that fit with the 'Sprig'—wouldn't he have got served out if it hadn't been for Mr. Simpson!"—made him try to hide his very large head in the thickest part of the crowd.

A bell ringing—the signal for the fireworks—relieved the doctor from the gaze of the public. He was forced in the rush to a very convenient place for seeing the exhibition, and received marked attention from a well-dressed man, and a handsomely-attired lady who leaned upon his arm. They made room for him out of the crush, explained to him the meaning of the various devices exhibited, and, after the display was over, won his heart by assuring him that he had been very ill-used by the

little vulgar fellow that had attacked him after grossly insulting him.

How much further their attentions might have gone it is impossible to say; but Simeon Flurry, who had been separated from his friend in the rush, rejoined him, and, putting his arm within his, hurried him off to a little box, and began shouting for a waiter. Forty or fifty voices answered, "Coming;" but no one did come, and, while they were waiting for a waiter, the doctor was busily engaged in looking at a *carte*, on which the bill of fare was written, with the prices of every edible and potable marked upon it.

"Cold chicken, ham, and champagne, of course," said Mr. Flurry.

"Chicken, six shillings; ham, two-and-sixpence; champagne, eighteen shillings," read Mr. Raymond Fowler; a sense of fear that *he* should have to pay twenty-six shillings and sixpence, besides the waiter, and the punch that was to follow the supper, in addition to what he had already paid for the coach, the admission-tickets, and to settle



" I really se
and I do thir
cheese, and a t
so excellent a c
" D—n brea
coming?" said t
excited.
" But the ex
again.
" D—n the
beg your pardo
ready told you t
We do not get
the amount of c
in the ocean of
The doctor
changed. He
tions, and shou
fifteen or two

to the most active-looking one of the lot. "Wait upon us solely, and I'll give you a crown."

The man bowed and winked at his fellows, who withdrew. The supper was ordered, and on the table in a few seconds.

"Tumblers," said Mr. Flurry.

The tapering glasses disappeared, and, before the doctor could cut off a wing of a chicken, pop!—fiz! his glass, a very large tumbler, was mantling over with the sparkling fluid.

"Don't wait," said Flurry.

The doctor took the hint, and tossed off the contents of his glass at a draught. He was very thirsty from his previous drinking, and the excitement of his quarrel, and the crowd in which he had been mixing. He smacked his lips as he set down his glass, sighed, and said, "Delicious! talk of nectar—Jupiter never brewed such stuff as that."

"Very fair," said his friend, critically. "I've drank better. Waiter, fill our glasses, and bring another bottle."



" why, w
of her mind,
to mind it,"
ing at his ov
tumbler of c
The secon
as, the first,
away, an ord
punch. It
Flurry, who
diminutive g
ordered tum
" Now tas
bumper to th
" Heavens
doctor, smac
and Phœbe
" Curse M
self. " Do

"It wants but one thing—drinking—hah! hah! hah! How much do they charge for it—eh?"

"Never mind—d—n the expense! Drink, and don't think—that's my motto."

"Have we drank Madame Priscilla's better health?" suggested the doctor.

"Not in *punch*," said Mr. Flurry. "Toss off your glass, and we'll do it now."

"With the honours. Hip!—hip!—"

"By no means; hush, for your own sake, hush. We shall have the eyes of every body upon us."

"What does that matter?—who cares for every body?—let's have a song," said the doctor, and began singing, in an appropriately croaking voice,

A frog he would a wooing go,
Heigho!

"Heigho, indeed," cried a person from the next box. "I wish you would not make such a noise."

"Who is that impertinent individual?" inquired the doctor.

"I really can't tell. Sit down, do."

"I will have a look at him. Why, bless me! my dear Squire, how are you? Flurry, my boy, here's aunt Priscilla's nephew."

Mr. Flurry took one look into the Squire's box, made a low bow, and dragged his friend back by the coat-tails into their own snuggery, when he saw who the Squire's companions were, and heard him say, "All right, doctor —but I'll talk to you by and by."

The doctor was indignant at being dragged away in so unceremonious a manner, and felt inclined to be quarrelsome; but a few whispered words of explanation caused him to forget the insult he fancied he had received, and the appearance of the Squire after he had parted with his friends—who proved to be Messrs. Chance and Nogo—and an order for another bowl of the delicious mixture made him a happy apothecary.

A delightful hour did the doctor pass. The world seemed a different world to him. He did not care a brass farthing for any body or any thing. Mrs. F. was forgotten. Phœbe's impudence was not dreamed of. His patients might die or not, as they

pleased; and as to his colts, he felt convinced that the one he had just purchased would be sure to win the Derby—if he was entered for it.

When the bowl was finished, the Squire retired, after having given the doctor his card and an invitation to breakfast on the following morning.

Mr. Simeon Flurry seemed to be relieved by the absence of so great a man as Squire Sowerberry of Sowerberry, although he had made himself very agreeable. He immediately ordered another bowl, and called on Mr. Raymond Fowler for a song. That gentleman tried to oblige his friend, but somehow or another he could not recollect either words or tune. He proposed to tell a story instead, and began a very long one about "a patient who was liable to the meagrims, and broke his coffin-joint by coming down upon hard ground in a leap, and who had been blistered and turned out on Sowerberry Common, and had never paid his little account up to that very hour, though he had threatened to sue him for the amount."

Mr. Flurry thought this account of the patient a very funny one, but the word *sue* was quite enough for him. He offered to undertake the job, at half-price, out of office hours, and wished to know where the recusant debtor was to be found.

"Down in the world—down—like the high-mettled racer—at plough—at plough" sighed the doctor.

"What—he is a farmer, is he?—an agricul—"

"No, he ain't — he's a horse," said the doctor.

Mr. Flurry looked his friend hard in the face, and fancied he looked sleepy.

"Ah, my dear aunt, how do you do? I'll be back in one moment," said Flurry, rushing up to a very young-looking aunt, and shaking hands with her.

"Phœbe, bring the bootjack and my slippers," said the doctor, fancying he was at home.

"My dear sir, you are not going to bed here, surely?" said a pleasing voice.

Fowler looked up, and saw the very lady

and gentleman, who had been so kind to him while the fireworks were being exhibited, sitting opposite to him.

"I really beg pardon. I was a little sleepy. Where's Simeon—eh? Take a little punch, madam? Why, bless me, Simeon's drank it all. Waiter! another bowl of punch."

It was brought in. The lady took a small glass of it, and the gentleman a very large one. He would not allow Mr. Raymond Fowler to be at the trouble of filling his own glass, but filled it for him; and the lady, as she handed it to him, poured a few drops into it from a little phial which she held concealed in her hand.

"This is not so good as the last," said the doctor. "If I was at home now, I should fancy Mrs. F. or Phœbe had put laudanum into it instead of rack—arrack—what do they call it?"

"Arrack," said the stranger. "It is very like laudanum when they put in too much of it; but come, my dear sir, you seem sleepy. Let us take a turn and look at the

company, and then return and finish the bowl."

Mr. Raymond Fowler readily consented, for he felt very queer indeed. The gentleman gave him his arm, and the lady supported him on the other side. No one saw them leave the box, for a riot of some sort had attracted everybody to the rotunda.

Mr. Flurry, having treated his aunt to a glass of sherry-and-water, returned for his friend. He was nowhere to be found. After making due inquiries, he thought, from the story of his patient—who was a horse—that he had found the punch too powerful for him, or, from the glimpse at the pocket-book, and the suggestion of bread-and-cheese and porter, that he was afraid of having to pay the whole or part of the reckoning, and had slipped away to his inn. He called for the bill and paid it; and, having given the waiter the promised gratuity, left the gardens and went home to bed.

The morning of the 13th of June, 18—, was, considering how fine the night had been,

one of the wettest and coldest that ever was known. Marvellous to say, it snowed at intervals; and the man who had the superintendence of Vauxhall Gardens—regarding them as gardens—was compelled to hoist an umbrella ere he proceeded to inspect the damage done to his plants and flowers. He walked slowly round and round the different paths, and at last came to what the frequenters of Vauxhall must remember as "the Dark Walk." On pulling aside the shrubs, he was surprised to see something like a human being, clad in white, lying on the ground close under the wall. He crept through the evergreens, and looked at the intruder, spoke to him, shouted at him, and lastly gave him a violent kick.

"He's dead," said the gardener, as he gave him a second and a harder kick. A deep hollow groan showed him that he had come to a wrong conclusion.

He grew alarmed at finding a man almost in a state of nudity on his premises—for the individual before him had neither coat, waistcoat, hat, boots, nor neckcloth upon him

—nothing but his shirt and his drabs, and in the pocket of those drabs was nothing but a card, having inscribed upon it,

MR. CHARLES SOWERBERRY,
22, *Paper Buildings*,
TEMPLE.

"Here's a pretty go! He's been robbed, and I shall have to bear the blame."

Away ran the gardener, and roused up the people in the house. With their assistance, our friend the doctor—for it was he, reader—was extracted from the shrubbery and placed in a hackney-coach. Accompanied by the gardener, he was driven rapidly to the address on the card found upon him. The porters kindly assisted in carrying him to Paper Buildings; and Mr. Sowerberry, of Sowerberry, was roused from his sleep to admit poor Raymond Fowler.

He rewarded the gardener liberally, paid the coachman, and sent one of the porters for a medical man to attend on his brother professional, whom he placed in his own warm bed. A severe illness followed; and, as all recollection of what had occurred after he

had taken a glass of arrack punch with a most respectable-looking lady and gentleman had escaped his mind, nothing remained to be done but to get him well again as speedily as possible.

Mr. Sowerberry was amply rewarded for his Samaritan-like conduct. In one of the papers of that very day—I mean the very day in which he had given up his own bed to a suffering, humble, fellow-creature, and sent for a surgeon to bind up his wounds—appeared the following paragraph:—

"DISGUSTING CONDUCT IN A BARRISTER.—This morning, at an early hour, Mr. Charles Sowerberry, of 22, Paper Buildings, Temple, was picked up, by the gardener of Vauxhall, in a beastly state of intoxication, in the Dark Walk. This, we are told, is the gentleman who has just deprived a most amiable branch of the Christian church of a considerable sum of money, by *making it appear*, through the evidence, chiefly, of a low country practitioner, that his aunt, who was a most zealous follower of the amiable sect alluded to, is not

competent to manage her own affairs. *Such* conduct needs no comment."

Of course this paragraph was copied into *all* the papers, and contradicted only in the *one* to which the Squire thought it most advisable to write.

Poor Raymond Fowler slowly recovered; but he never recovered his clothes or the pocket-book containing five five-pound notes, besides two ten-pound notes, which he had taken up with him in case Messrs. Chance and Nogo should not perform the promises made in the twenty-penny letter.

Flurry acted like a true friend, and gave him a check for fifty pounds, which he included in the costs *de lunatico*. This had such an effect on the doctor, that his recovery was so rapid as to enable him to get out of bed and view his person in the glass.

"Is it me?—is it—can this be me?" he almost shrieked. His hair, a fine bushy crop of reddish auburn, without a *gray* in it, had disappeared. It had been partially shaved off to allow of a blister, and what remained had

fallen off of its own accord, under the influence of a severe fever. A deep groan escaped the poor doctor.

What was to be done? Mrs. F. had written up to say that Phœbe had told her that Rachel Tims was likely to be called in to the lady who was about to be "down with her seventeenth," unless he returned home without delay. What was to be done?

"I know," said Simeon Flurry. "Come along with me."

They went to a theatrical barber's; and, as the only wig at all suitable in colour and size was the one in which Munden used to play *Crack* in the "Turnpike Gate," the doctor purchased it, and, in a borrowed suit of the Squire's, set off home without delay and without any groceries.

When he arrived at home, he found the Squire consoling his wife, Mrs. F., chattering with Henrietta, and enjoying his strong beer. He pulled off his hat! The Squire burst out laughing. Mrs. F. shrieked. Henrietta shuddered, and Phœbe snatched the horrible-looking wig from her master's head, telling him

not to be a donkey. This made matters worse. There he stood as bald as he was born; and so odd a sight did he present to all his beholders, that for five minutes he stood confounded amidst a din of laughter.

"Good by," said the Squire; "try Rowland or bear's grease—ah! ah! ah! I shall burst if I stay. Henrietta's a nice girl, but, by jingo, who could marry the daughter of a man in a *Crack* wig!"

The Squire was soon afterwards married to a neighbouring Squire's sister. Mrs. F. lost her son-in-law and her groceries, and the doctor lost, and never recovered, his hair. He discharged Phœbe for burning Munden's wig, and declared that, if he ever was summoned up to London again on a *de lunatico*, he would never be guilty of finishing with a dinner.

FINALE.

I, Mr. Snum Cuique, am sorry to be compelled to confess that, when Great Tom had concluded his last tale, I awoke and found



myself in my own arm-chair instead of in his inside. I had a shocking bad headache, and my mouth was very much parched; both my candles — burnt down to the sockets — were safe, and my poker rested calmly by my side. An *empty* bottle was at my elbow. Had I *exceeded?*

I leave the world to answer the question.

THE END.



Frederick Shoberl, Junior, Printer to His Royal H
51, Rupert Street, Haymarket, L









